

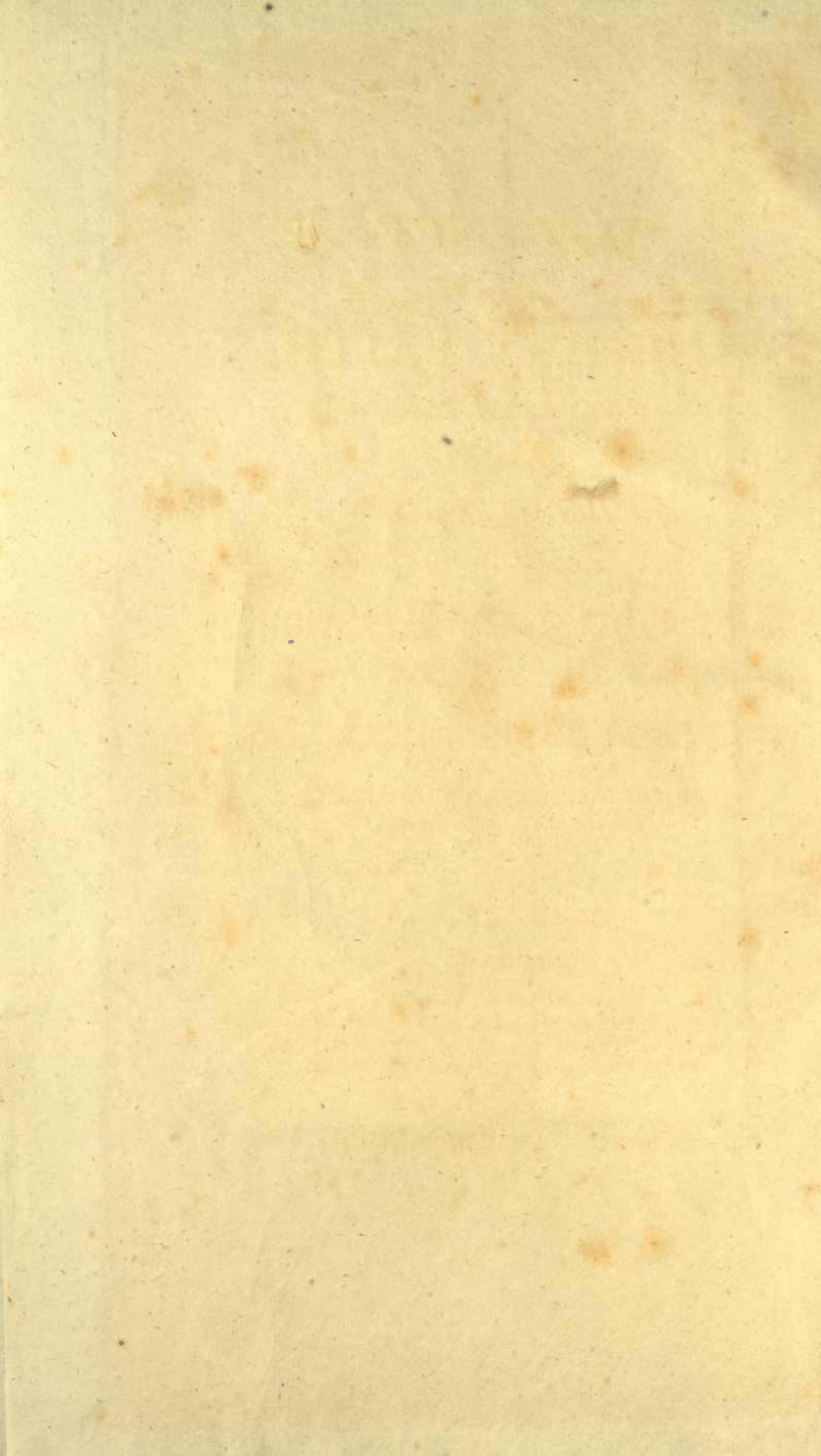


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A  
DEFENCE  
OF THE  
ANCIENT FAITH,  
IN FOUR VOLUMES;  
OR  
*A FULL EXPOSITION*  
OF  
The Christian Religion.  
IN A SERIES OF  
CONTROVERSIAL SERMONS.

BY THE REV. PETER GANDOLPHY,  
Priest of the Catholic Church.

VOL. II.

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## SERMON XVI.

ON THE PREJUDICES EXISTING AGAINST  
RELIGION.

*Return again to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her. (Dan. xiii. 49.)*

AS man is always liable to err, he never gives a stronger proof of his wisdom, than when he reviews his own actions, and tries them by the test of cool reflection. It is common to the wise and to the simple at times to be led astray :—but it is the part of fools only never to acknowledge error. As a proud man is always a man of weak mind, so true humility springs from greatness of soul. The humble man confesses, what the proud man dares not avow. Having vindicated the Catholic Church from the charge of idolatry, I cannot, then, too

urgently press my Protestant friends to look back to that state of mind in which their ancestors sallied forth from the pale of the Catholic Church. It was under such impressions of resentment, and in that state of feverish irritation in which no prudent man would ever wish to decide on any important subject, that they broke the sacred tie of communion, and ranged themselves in schismatical opposition to her authority. But time, the common pacificator of national as well as individual passions, has at length calmed this sea of ferment, and after the lapse of three centuries, we are enabled to meet in familiar discussion, and in the language of charity to vindicate the cause of injured truth. It should indeed afford to the sincere Christian a real satisfaction, to find, that unawed by power, uninfluenced by resentment, unshackled by penalties, men may now proceed to that cool revision and impartial examination of their own acts, which distinguish the conduct of the wise

and prudent from the herd of heedless mortals.

It is to this happy alteration of circumstances, my Brethren, that I am to ascribe my own success in inducing many persons to resign their violent prejudices against the Catholic Church:—through this I have been enabled to expose the groundless charges adduced against her of idolatry, corruption, and superstition: yet I would not have you imagine that I shall rest satisfied with this partial vindication of her honour. No! I shall not repose here;—nobler triumphs, I trust, yet await her. Pursuing therefore my plan, my next object shall be to prove incontestibly, by a series of demonstrations, that true virtue and religion are to be attained exclusively in the Catholic Church. In the words of the prophet then I exclaim, *return again to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her.* (Dan. xiii. 49.)

It is worthy of the Protestant to consider what have been the peculiar circum-



stances of the true religion from the earliest ages of the world, and to observe its distinctive and characteristic features. It will be seen that owing to the perversity of the human heart and the blindness of the understanding, the religion, which the Almighty prescribed to man, was scarcely heeded by the mass of the species, but lodged in the sanctuaries of particular families from generation to generation, has been transmitted with every care and respect becoming the high importance attached to it by those who were acquainted with its divine excellence; whilst to all others it remained an object either of hatred or contempt.—It will be seen that though it inculcated every interior virtue, especially those of humility and purity of heart, and that although prayer and sacrifice were its daily and familiar exercises, yet the mass of men treated it with the most stupid indifference,—tried it by their own hereditary habits and inclinations, and

took every occasion to insult and persecute it.

For proof I might appeal to the ancient history of the world recorded by the profane poets,—to the books of the Old Testament, and to the universal conduct of the Gentiles towards the Jews. It might be proved by the sufferings of that persecuted people in Egypt, as well as in their subsequent captivities—as also by the cruel wars waged against their nation through hatred to its religion.—It might, in fine, be proved by the lamentations of Jeremiah, and by the writings of Tobias, Daniel, and the other Prophets. But, my Friends, it will suffice to instance the conduct of the very Jews themselves at the coming of the Messiah in the flesh.—When we mark their blind indifference, their irreligious demeanour, their violent opposition, are we not ready to express our astonishment that an entire nation, aware of their deliverer being at hand, should be so insensible to their dearest interests and

glory, as to leave the boast of Israel to be only acknowledged by his poor parents, a few shepherds, and the devout servants of the temple, Simeon and Anna. Shall we not feel surprise that the spiritual lethargy of the Jewish nation was not immediately awakened into lively curiosity, when his birth was announced in Jerusalem by the Wise-Men from the East, who entering the court of Herod, exclaimed, *where is he that is born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him.* (Matt. ii. 2.) Is it not more than wonderful, that for the space of thirty years, the coming and very existence of the Messiah should have been a secret to that nation? Although he had been preached, nay pointed out by the Baptist,—though he had publicly shewn himself in the temple, astonishing the doctors by the wisdom of his discourse and the pertinence of his questions, still truth and sanctity moved in the midst of Israel unheeded and unknown. It is moreover to



be observed, that during that period the law was regularly explained in the synagogues to the people,—the signs marked out by the prophets all stood fulfilled,—yet no one proceeded to BETHLEM to inquire if her RULER was born. (*Matt. ii. 5.*)

It is truly humbling then to the pride of human reason and the boasted virtue of man, to reflect, that with the exception of the WISE-MEN of the East, the pious curiosity of none was awakened at his birth, though a general expectation prevailed among mankind, that a Saviour was about to appear. Tacitus alludes to this general sentiment in the following terms. “It was believed by many that it had been declared in some ancient writings of priests, that at that time the East should become powerful, and that men from Judea should make themselves masters of the world\*.” Suetonius also says that such was “the ancient and constant tradition spread over

\* Tacit. Hist. lib. 5. c. 9.

all the East\*." Notwithstanding then, this sentiment was universally impressed upon the nations of the East, yet they continued the obstinate dupes of their own corruption and insensibility.

But, my Friends, I wish particularly to fix your attention on what passed after Jesus Christ had preached his doctrine, and manifested himself to the Jews as the divine Son of God. He came forward a model of obedience to the will of his Father and the precepts of the law. He was *obedient even unto death*. (Phil. ii. 8.) He was to the proud a pattern of humility and meekness. *Learn of me*, said he, *for I am meek and humble of heart*. (Matt. xi. 29.) He coveted not the riches of this world, but walked the rugged path of self-denial and penance. (Matt. viii. 10.) He promised heaven to *the clean of heart*, and reproved every adulterous thought. (Matt. v. 28.) He taught to all charity and brotherly love, saying : *I give you a new com-*

\* Vespas. c. 4.

*mandment ; love one another as I have loved you.* (John xiii. 34.) Yet, my brethren, no sooner did this amiable model of virtue manifest himself to the Jews, and invite them to adopt the maxims of his gospel,—no sooner, by his miracles, did he appear clothed in the power of omnipotence and devoted to the divine office of reclaiming and instructing sinners, than the whole Jewish priesthood immediately arrayed itself in opposition, under the specious pretext of defending their law ; and exciting the passions of the populace against this victim of their jealousy, they designated the Author of the Gospel a blasphemer, an enemy of their government, and a disturber of the public peace. Oh ! slander, what wilt thou be afraid to asperse after this ? They so far carried their resentment, as to persuade the people, in their mistaken zeal for religion, to demand his destruction, and to prefer the guilty and impious malefactor Barabbas to the beloved Son of God and the Saviour of



men. All Jerusalem looked on with indifference whilst the Author of life and grace was expiring on the cross.

But instead of giving way to our reflections at present, let us pursue this inquiry further, and examine the circumstances of religion after the preaching of the gospel. Carried into Greece, and unfolded to the philosophy of paganism, it was published from the Roman capitol and in the courts of the Cæsars, yet for three hundred years was the object of popular hatred and legislative persecution. Though the Christians in their lives developed all the amiable virtues of the gospel,—though justice and innocence, meekness and charity, were displayed in the heroic sufferings of the virgins and confessors, yet we observe that the bulk of mankind preferred their erroneous systems of religion, and with an unaccountable insensibility heard and despised those sublime truths which were announced with the gospel of Jesus. Such, indeed, were the deformity and gross na-

ture of the errors of paganism, that the very mention of them, it might be supposed, would have been sufficient to have ensured their reprobation.

But no ! it seems that the advances of men in religious improvement are universally slow. They can with ardour immediately enter into schemes which raise them in political society,—they can seize such plans and conceptions as increase their fortunes and promote the prosperity of their country,—they can praise and admire whatever enriches the departments of science, or adorns the walks of learning and taste ; but to those moral improvements which religion prescribes, they are absolutely insensible. Nay, jealous of those restraints which she imposes on the passions, such persons become her determined enemies and persecutors. In proof, I appeal to that blood which has streamed from innumerable martyrs,—I appeal to the persecutions endured by confessors and virgins,—I appeal, in fine, to that universal and incessant

struggle carried on between the maxims of the world and the maxims of the gospel. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit*, writes the apostle, *and the spirit against the flesh, for these are contrary one to another.* (Gal. v. 17.)

It is a fact therefore, resting on the experience and the evidence of ages, that from the beginning of the world, man was more disposed to resist, than to embrace the true religion ; and that opposition to it is more natural to him, than any other course. It appears that, under the direction of his unruly passions, he easily becomes the dupe of a mistaken conscience, and, led by a blinded zeal, has unfortunately too generally been found hostile to truth and virtue. I have established this reflection by a reference to the history of mankind through a long succession of ages ; and if it be remarked that I have not pursued the inquiry to the epoch of modern times, it is because I consider further proof unnecessary. For I conceive



the present generation must be aware that they have inherited the passions of their fathers, and are still exposed to be influenced by the same feelings. Indeed they must acknowledge from experience, that our nature retains the same dislike to restraint,—the same unbounded love of forbidden pleasure, the same attachment to its own perverse dispositions. Whence it follows, that as human nature is naturally so corrupted and prone to evil, we should be peculiarly diffident of our conceptions of virtue,—learn to suspect our own hearts,—and accustom ourselves to prove true religion by other tests than those which men ordinarily employ.

Nor will it be contended by any, I hope, that the profession and extension of Christianity should at once relieve the modern believer from the alarm excited by these reflections. The religion of Christ was undoubtedly designed to triumph over Paganism and idolatry, and like a beautiful vine to stretch its tendrils to the remotest

corners of the earth. Under the figure of a field of corn, it is represented flourishing and prosperous : but it should be remembered, that the *cockle* is described as well as the *wheat*, and it is expressly said, they shall continue together until the *time of the harvest*. All the parables and declarations of scripture moreover shew, that although the Church of Christ was to grow up into a vigorous *tree* from the insignificance of *a grain of mustard seed*, still it is clear that the enemies of religion will far outnumber its true professors—for *few are chosen*, but *many are called*:—and whilst the entrance into eternal *life* is *strait* and *narrow*, *the way to perdition* is *broad* and spacious, and crowded are the ranks that walk it. Nay, at the same time that Jesus Christ promises the glorious extension and perpetuity of his Church, he also prepares us for the gradual decline of virtue and religion towards the latter days, by predicting the

almost total extinction of *faith upon earth*.  
(Luke xviii. 8.)

I do think then, my Friends, that the striking picture I have placed before your eyes should teach you greater circumspection in religion, and induce you to examine with a scrupulous nicety, if your piety be not founded in error, and the vicious principle of self-love. By self-love I mean an inordinate fondness for ourselves, or a disposition to sacrifice truth to passion. This principle becomes the most blinding and delusive temptation to which our nature can be exposed; it proved the seducing charm of our first parents, and has never ceased to be the greatest obstacle that virtue has to encounter. It has deluged the world with every species of crime,—given birth to every heresy and schism, and has consigned millions unrepenting to the eternal torments of hell. In fine, life and death,—light and darkness are not more opposed to each other than this principle to the gospel of Jesus:



the essence of which is the mortification of the understanding, the mortification of the passions, and the mortification of the body.

The two great principles of erroneous conduct next to self-love, against which you should also guard your virtue, are the effect of example and the force of education. You should be sensible after all you have heard, that example is a most dangerous rule exclusively to act by; and I am prepared to assert that in nineteen cases out of twenty, will involve men in fatal error. It was the infection of example that contaminated the whole world with idolatry, and retained it in its superstitions:—it was example that hardened the hearts of men against the pure and holy maxims of Jesus Christ, when the martyrs preached them from scaffolds to their persecutors:—it is fatal example that has often quieted the guilty conscience, and allayed those remorse which otherwise might have brought it back to repentance.

Ah! how many silence the reproaches of conscience by this expedient, and pretend to justify a breach of the divine commandments by a reference to the example of others. Nay, did not our first parent himself excuse that crime which involved his whole posterity in ruin by appealing to the example given him by his consort Eve? yet he nevertheless received the full weight of his threatened chastisement. And Jesus Christ in the Gospel, to caution men against giving bad example, sufficiently marks the offence by saying, *wo to the world because of scandals.* (Matt. xviii. 7.)

I wish here to insist more particularly on this great point, because example seems to be among Protestants the almost only rule of choice in religion. Thus for many years past the lower orders of that community, in this country, have been withdrawing from the Pastors of the Church of England; and placing themselves under new directors have generally entered into the society of Methodists. By what

principle then is it that they act? By the same principle, I reply, on which their fathers became Protestants, and withdrew from the Catholic Church. A king led the way, and the people followed. After attentively examining, I repeat, every motive that seems to influence the decision of these persons, in favour of Methodism, I cannot discover one efficient cause but that which I have already mentioned. Example we all know is the most powerful stimulant of human nature. Its influence on the ideas, habits, and manners of men cannot be more strongly shewn than by remarking its effects in childhood :—and were I allowed to seek an illustration in the animal species, I would notice the readiness with which they are observed to follow each others steps. This is owing to the power of blind instinct, and should no ways be attributed to the influence of reason, which should be the governing principle of human conduct. In these deluded sectaries then, we have a



striking resemblance of a flock of sheep, wandering without a shepherd ; and whether we attend to their style of language and expression, or to the singularity of their dress, it will not be easy to discover that they are guided by any other rule but that of example.

The next point against which I would place you on your guard, is the influence of education, than which none is more powerful, none so lasting : more or less it determines through life the character of our thoughts. From education the mind receives that bias, which it is observed, men seldom afterwards succeed in correcting ; and hence it is justly compared to a second nature. Survey the different nations, and see how completely it forms and fashions their inhabitants to its own variety. Observe its effects, in our notions of language, government, dress, and every habit of life. See how it is felt when persons move out of their own country into a foreign land, and mark the difficulty experienced in ex-

changing one national prejudice for another.

If then education shews itself so powerfully in forming the citizen, can we require to be placed upon our guard against its influence in religion? No! its operation is too evident to need a proof, and may be observed throughout the heathen, as well as the Christian world. It is education that makes the Mahometan in Turkey—the Hindoo in India—and the idolatrous Pagan in China. It is education that makes the Lutheran in Sweden, the Calvinist in Geneva, and the Church of England Protestant in Britain. And is it not education that also makes the Catholic? I fear, my Brethren, that many persons are only Catholics by education. However, independently of education, which I have shewn to be a most hazardous rule of religion, thanks to heaven! there are other principles on which the Catholic faith is far more securely and solidly established. With these principles it becomes the Protestant

as well as the Catholic to be acquainted, and such is their simplicity, that every observer must be instantly convinced that they have their foundation in truth.

Briefly to advert to them then : as true religion is derived from God, man having been instructed in it by the Deity, true religion must always bear in itself the stamp of the Deity, and shew by its own nature that it directly emanates from him. For it should ever be remembered, that although religion is a moral tribute which man renders to his Creator, yet man received it from the Deity. *God, writes St. Paul, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world.* (Heb. i. 1.)

Therefore, if we simply reflect on what is essential to God, we shall immediately perceive that a BEING whose essence is unity of nature, can only be properly ho-



noured by unity of religion ; for as he can only be properly honoured by that religion which is most worthy of him, so he can only be properly honoured by ONE. Hence UNITY is a characteristic of true religion, and consequently becomes a true mark of distinction. Moreover as this religion characterizes its professors, who all-together compose a body, or society, commonly called a Church, so they form a Church on the head of every member of which may be inscribed the sign UNITY. Unity therefore, my Brethren, is that true, essential, and distinguishing feature, whereby to know the true Church of Christ.

As the nature of God is individual, so it is also essentially HOLY. *And they rested not in heaven, says the apostle, day and night, saying holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.* (Apoc. iv. 8.) As God then is the essence of sanctity, he can only be properly worshipped by a religion that is essentially HOLY. Now, that religion only is essentially holy, which has the

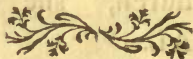
means of imparting justification to its professors. Its professors therefore constitute a society or church, from which sanctity is inseparable; inasmuch as it inherently possesses the means of imparting justification to all its individual members. The true Church of Christ consequently cannot teach a religion repugnant to sanctity. At the same time therefore that she is essentially ONE she is also essentially HOLY.

Moreover as true religion is essentially ONE and HOLY, it is necessarily neither limited to *period* nor *place*; that is, it is CATHOLIC or universal. *I will give thee*, says the Psalmist, *the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.* (Ps. ii. 8.) The Church of Christ therefore is as essentially CATHOLIC or universal, as she is essentially ONE and HOLY.

Lastly, the apostles having been chosen by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel and plant his Church, she is essentially APOSTOLICAL.

These then are the four characteristics by which Catholics distinguish the truth and divinity of that religion they profess:—these are the four marks\* which designate the true Church of Christ from every other. It shall be my object in succeeding discourses, more fully to develop these signs, and to enable even Protestants to learn true religion by them. Interim I have only to request them patiently to listen to an individual, who addresses them from the purest motives, and is willing to sacrifice his domestic peace, his claim to popularity, and his worldly interests to the dearest object of his affections, their eternal happiness; the blessing I daily supplicate for them as well as for myself.

\* See the Nicene Creed in the LITURGY OR BOOK OF COMMON PRAYERS, page 183.





## SERMON XVII.

ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH\*.

*And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.*  
(John x. 16.)

**T**HE essence of God being one and indivisible, there can be nothing changeable in the nature of his attributes or perfections. That is, what his justice and his mercy are in regard to us, they are in themselves—what they are in the present moment, they were a thousand years back—and what they were a thousand years back, they will continue to be through all eternity. Thus truth, being a divine perfection, is essentially ONE, unchangeable and indivisible.

When our divine Redeemer therefore descended from the throne of his Father,

\* On this and the other marks of the Church, I cannot too strongly recommend the eight elegant Discourses by the Author of the SERMONS AFTER PENTECOST.

clothed in the nature of man, in order to realize all the figures of the old law,—to raise to perfection that system of religion which *God at sundry times and in divers manners* had taught *in times past to the fathers by the prophets*, he brought with him full powers completely to establish on earth this sublime doctrine of truth, and himself instructed in that heavenly science, those whom he selected to preach his revealed word to the four quarters of the world. His gospel therefore being the language of eternal truth, must be essentially immutable,—the light to the understanding, and the doctrinal guide of every one professing the revealed religion of Jesus Christ. It forms the basis and universal principle of moral and theological virtue, whilst whatever is opposed to it, is founded in error, and constitutes crime; that only being characterized as indifferent with which the rule does not interfere. *Where there is no law*, writes the apostle, *neither is there transgression.* (Rom. iv. 15.)

All the disciples of Christ therefore, imbibing doctrine at the same fountain of truth, must necessarily profess the same faith and practise the same worship ; which bond of spiritual communion, traced up to Jesus Christ through every age, is the first of those grand characteristics by which the true Church shall be at all times distinguished as *one fold and one shepherd* \*.

\* There is reason to apprehend that in the judgments of many of my Protestant readers, I may pass for a person strongly infected with what is termed *bigotry*. Bigotry, according to Dr. Johnson, signifies, “ blind zeal, prejudice, or an unreasonable warmth in favour of party or opinions.” If then, in treating the characteristics of the church, I any where appear to have merited this reproach from the Protestant, I have only to request, before sentence is finally passed upon my character, that he will recollect, I distinctly assert, that I have admitted into these discourses no principle or proposition, however harsh or severe according to the letter, which I cannot shew to be the sentiment of the most esteemed of the Protestant writers of the present day. Many proofs of the truth of this assertion will appear in the sequel of this volume. But as I cannot be allowed to produce a special evidence for each successive position, I must be satisfied with referring my candid reader to the works of these writers, among which



By this distinguished mark of unity then, we do not merely mean that Jesus Christ has one only Church upon earth, but moreover that this one Church is UNDIVIDED, — that all its members spread throughout the world, are united in the profession of the same faith,—that all practise the same worship by participating in the same sacraments, and are all subject to the authority of one Pastor. Hence, although the Church of Christ be represented in the scripture under many figures, there is none so justly descriptive of her compact and united form, as that of the

I particularly instance, Davies's Church Union, Barwick's Treatise on the Church, and the courses of the Oxford Bampton Lectures, by Mant, Mesurier, &c. I admit that these writers make a different application of the principles in question; however this circumstance no ways militates against their soundness, but rather establishes them as *first principles*. To instance then here one example of this Protestant support in favour of our principle of *UNITY* of communion, I will quote Barwick's Treatise, 2d edition, p. 6. "The Catholic Church is the one universal society of all christian people, distributed under lawful governors and pastors, into particular churches holding communion with each other."

*sheepfold. Other sheep I have, said Jesus Christ, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.*

(John x. 16.) By which we are distinctly told that Jews and Gentiles, and all the disciples of Christ of every nation of the world, should be collected in *one fold* or congregation, under the superintendence of *one Pastor*. The argument therefore to be employed in this discourse, will be simply this:—that alone is the true Church of Christ, in which there is unity of doctrine,—unity of worship,—and unity of authority.\* But these properties are exclusively found to exist in the Roman Catholic Church; therefore the Roman Catholic Church is exclusively the true Church of Christ, to which we must be united by communion.

\* This definition agrees with the Protestant: "These three marks," says Barwick, "the essentials of FAITH, WORSHIP and GOVERNMENT, are the characteristic notes, by which the pure Catholic Church is every where distinguished from the congregations of heretics and schismatics." Treatise, p. 16.

The Christian Church being a religious society established by our divine Redeemer himself, whereof all the members, subject to the same authority, have a communion of faith, of doctrine, and of worship, this bond of union is to the mystical body of Christ, what cement is to any material building. For as every material fabric, without its cement, must soon decay and become a ruinous mass, so this spiritual edifice without the aid of this connecting principle, would soon yield to the violence of the human passions, and dissolve into a crumbling fragment. — Indeed, destroy this communion and subjugation to authority, and I know not what remains to constitute a church : unless you maintain, that in the scattered materials of a fabric, the real fabric exists ;—or that the stones, columns, and timbers of a building, either properly disposed in union, so as to form a church, or dispersed about the country, constitute an edifice suited to the purposes of divine worship.



My Brethren, you admit the absurdity of the supposition. Do not, therefore, attempt to defend your false principle, by instancing the variety of materials which enter into a structure of human art,—nor suppose that the comparison can apply to the various sects and divisions of Christians. I am aware, it has been maintained by some Protestant divines, that God is as much glorified by variety of faith and religion, as he is by variety of complexion and countenance. But surely these persons know, that by such a sentiment they are only endeavouring to cut the knot which they find themselves unable to untie. They certainly do not require to be told, that this variety they applaud, which is exclusively a property of matter, has no reference whatever to the operations of the mind. For matter, however varied, still continues matter, and is indifferent to any of the changes it undergoes.—But the properties of the mind are wholly different:—the language of truth can only change to

error—virtue into vice. And therefore, to suppose that the Deity can be gratified by variety in doctrine and religion, is to imagine that he does not distinguish between right and wrong—good and evil :—a sentiment verging upon atheism, and subversive both of truth and virtue.

Resting on these premises then, I propose this simple question :—where subsists the connection between the sects just alluded to—is it in heaven or on earth? If you answer, Jesus Christ is the common link of union—I ask, is the second Person of the blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ, any link of union which the Father is not? Is not the Godhead also the common link of union to all mankind, in their varieties of tribes and nations? Are we not collectively under his providence, as the chickens are under the hen? Yet does the mass of mankind form that united Church we are at present contemplating, under the image of the *shepherd and the sheepfold*? No! there must exist among them a more perfect mo-

ral union, before they can constitute a Christian Church. *I know mine*, said Jesus Christ, *and mine know me—it is not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father.* (John x. 14.—Matt. vii. 24.)

Indeed, my brethren, if the Christian Church could exist as a divided or divisible community, it would in fact belie every character it now holds \*; and in such a heterogeneous structure it would be impossible for any one to avow from his heart, that it visibly displayed the wisdom and arrangement of a divine architect. Rather would it demonstrate itself most evidently to be the work of mortal hands, and betray the defective and confined abilities of man. *Every kingdom divided against itself*, said our divine Saviour,

\* “All these particular churches, into which the Catholic Church is distributed, must be in communion with each other, otherwise they are so far from being parts of the Catholic Church, that they are only so many schisms and divisions from it.” Barwick’s Treatise, p. 7.



*shall be made desolate ; and every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand.* (Matt. xii. 25.) In short, when this declaration is combined with the assurance that *his Church built upon a rock*, is proof against the gates of hell, (Matt. xvi. 18.) is it not evident that she must be divinely protected in her faith and unity ; and though surrounded by enemies, that she shall triumph in the midst of them ? Else moreover, why did the Saviour offer up this prayer before his passion ; *I pray, said he, for all who shall believe in me. That they all may be one, as thou Father in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* (John xvii. 20, 21.) Nay, are not the divisions of Christians urged by the infidel as a conclusive argument against the truth of the Gospel ? Are they not employed by him to subvert the whole system of revealed religion, and made to triumph, in his judgment, over all the formidable evidences on which it is esta-

blished?—to prostrate its sublime morality—paralyze its virtues, and present the house of God as the bear-garden of strife and contention?

My Brethren, with these impressions on your minds, take a view of the sects and divisions of Christendom, consider the animosities and bloodshed their religious dissensions have occasioned, and say if they form any part of the Christian system. Is it in the indiscriminate mass of contradictory principles and creeds, or among the horrid discord of jarring doctrines and persecuting adversaries that you are inclined to place the precious gifts of charity, and peace, and the faith of the New Law? No, my Brethren, it is impossible—and I maintain, that without that union of members, which Jesus Christ asked for his Church of his Eternal Father, the world never could have been converted to Christianity—the Gentile nations would yet be immersed in infidelity, whilst the

miracles of the apostles and the labours of confessors would have been of no avail,—because in opposition to that first principle, the unity of truth.

Let some persons, for instance, be selected from each of the congregations or sects of this kingdom, and well instructed in their respective tenets, let them be deputed successively, or in a body to preach the Gospel to a heathenish and idolatrous nation. Can you tell me what species of Christians they would form?—or rather would they form any?—Would any credit be given to men professing truth, yet condemning one another? Would not the conversion of the country be soon lost sight of, and their united zeal to bring others over to Christianity, giving way to the most bitter private animosity, vent itself in personal calumny and abuse;—I am not afraid to add even open violence?—So that the only example they would leave these wretched infidels, would be a sanction to the practice of every vice, and



the indulgence of every passion which the Gospel of Jesus condemns. Indeed how often have we seen this assertion verified at home, and in our own colonies\* !—My Brethren, there never was and never will be a people converted by such ministers. Before they enter upon the sacred office of bringing others to the true faith, let them first reduce to practice, and then teach this doctrine of the apostle :—*Now, I beseech ye Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.* (1 Cor. i. 10.)

The Jewish Church, which was a figure of the Christian Church, was not only ONE, but in one only spot was allowed to offer a sacrifice to the living God. It was this, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us, which caused Jews to assemble at

\* See note vol. I. p. 385.

Jerusalem, from every nation under heaven, whilst the violation of this same commandment of the Almighty was the express reason of the condemnation of the guilty Jeroboam, who, as you read in the third book of Kings, *made temples in high places, and priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi:—and for this cause did the house of Jeroboam sin, and was cut off and destroyed from the face of the earth.* (xii. 31.—xiii. 34.) Indeed, my Brethren, as the admission of a plurality of gods, among pagans and idolaters, is a self-demonstration that they are false, so the recognition of a multiplicity of churches among sectaries is a manifest proof that they are heretical; truth being essentially uniform, and error variable.

In this the Protestant Church of England perfectly coincides with the Catholic: for in the eighteenth article of the profession of faith which stands in the COMMON PRAYER-BOOK, its members swear, “they also are to be had accursed, who shall pre-

sume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature." And by another article of her creed, she declares, that "except a man do keep the Catholic faith, whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Which doctrine, in her eight article, she pronounces, "may be proved by the most evident texts of holy scripture."

To these weighty authorities I might also add the corroborating testimony of the Protestant churches of Germany and Geneva; but to avoid being tedious, shall content myself with that solemn declaration of the dissenting Kirk of Scotland, sanctioned by its Parliament in the year 1560, as a doctrine grounded according to the expression "on the infallible word of God."—It is as follows; "as we believe in one God, so we most constantly believe, that from the beginning



there hath been, now is, and to the end of the world shall be ONE KIRK: out of which Kirk neither life, nor eternal felicity is to be hoped for or had: and therefore we utterly abhor the blasphemy of those who affirm that men who live according to *equity* and *justice*, shall be saved, in *what-ever religion* they may have lived.” \*

The same is also strenuously maintained by the most learned of the Protestant divines. Hammond, a celebrated writer amongst them, has left us this passage in his work on schism: “according to St. Augustin, it is not possible that there can exist any *lawful cause* for separating from the Catholic Church; and consequently no excuse can be admitted for those, who through any reason, whether true or false, have really made such a separation. Neither are we to inquire into the cause or motive of a schism,

\* See original Profession of the Kirk of Scotland, reprinted at Glasgow, A. D. 1771. Art. 16.

or give it any attention : but only to inform ourselves of this fact, whether he who is accused of schism, has really made it \*.”—Thoradike, another distinguished Protestant divine, tells us in his *Just Weights*, that “the sin of schism is of a horrible tincture. For,” says he, “a heretic, or an apostate in the sight of God, destroys only his own soul ; but he that causeth division in the Church, either peremptorily destroys, or probably hinders the salvation of all that are parties to it.”—“Until the dregs of our times, I do not know that it was ever disputed, that Christians are not bound to be members of one and the same visible Church †.”

With this testimony before them, there may be some, who feeling uneasy in their situation, will perhaps ask, if the writings of the fathers and the sacred scriptures do not furnish some evidence, on the other

\* C. 1.

† Cc. 2. 6.

side of the question, countenancing a diversity of communions? I answer most positively in the negative: not a single authority, either from the scriptures or the fathers, can be produced to this effect. But again, perhaps they will ask, may we not at least compose our anxieties with this sentence so frequently repeated, *a remnant of all shall be saved*? My Brethren, would to God, not a remnant only, but that all might receive the reward of eternal happiness. To hold out however false assurances of salvation, will neither suit your interest or my views.\* I must therefore

\* There are some Catholics, who either ignorant of the nature of TRUTH, or too pusillanimous to profess it, or too indifferent to its consequences, endeavour to persuade their Protestant friends, that they are not so *bigotted* and *intolerant* as the generality of their brethren. By their style of conduct and conversation these persons seem to partake, like the mule, of two natures, and to be both Protestant and Catholic at once. Now there is no character that I am more desirous of opening to my Protestant countrymen, since there is none so entitled to their contempt. They should know then, that none are more



frankly tell you that no such text exists ; and that it is one of those corruptions of scripture too often imposed upon the sim-

thoroughly infected with what the Protestants understand by *bigotry* and *intolerance*, than these *liberal* minded Catholics, who differ from other Catholics in nothing but the hypocritical mask, under which they conceal themselves from Protestant observation. While the honest Catholic is styled an *intolerant bigot*, because he believes no one can be saved out of the Catholic Church,—the *liberal* Catholic, on the other hand, to avoid the odium frequently attached to the maintenance of truth, endeavours to reconcile his Protestant neighbour by telling him, “that there are as many men of *liberality* and *charity* in the Catholic Church as in the Protestant—that bigots to be sure will be found every where—but that he has *no notion of damning a man merely because he differs with him in sentiment*. Mark, christian reader, there never was a more slanderous and foul accusation than what is implied by this artful sentence. The honest Catholic damns no man ;—neither the heretic nor the adulterer : but simply declares the law, and in fear and trembling tries by faith and good works to make his own calling and election sure. Let the Protestant then only sift this *liberal* Catholic a little—let him practice cross examination upon him, and he will soon unmask the *deceiver*. Let him ask him, for instance, if he believes the true revealed religion of Jesus Christ necessary for salvation ; and if so, whether he believes that this is *one* ;

ple. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, says, that *the Word of God had not miscarried* in respect to the Israelites, *for all are not Israelites, that are of Israel.* And quoting the language of Isaiab, who had prophetically foreseen the Messiah's rejection by the Jews, he exclaims, *if the number of the Children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:* (c. ix. 27.) that is, of their immense multitude only a small proportion would be saved by embracing the Christian faith. The apostle therefore adds, *even so then at*

and moreover, whether he believes that he himself professes it in the Catholic Church. In short, whether he thinks that himself (the Catholic) could obtain salvation in the Protestant church?—or is aware of any ground of exception but involuntary error, on which the Protestant may securely rely? Now if he answer these two last questions in the negative, and the others in the affirmative (as he undoubtedly will, should he be a Catholic) will not this amount to the plain profession of the honest Catholic?—and should it not convince every Protestant, that this affectation of *liberality* is only duplicity under a false name? and that the Catholic who has the courage to profess, and the honour to tell his sentiment, is the more virtuous man?

*this present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace—yea the election hath obtained it, and the rest have been blinded. (Rom. xi. 5. 7.)*

But, my Brethren, does this bear upon the question before us? Certainly not.—To interpret therefore the passage *a remnant of ALL SECTS shall be saved*, is not only a most gross corruption of the sacred text, and shews this doctrine to be without any scriptural authority;—but is moreover a blasphemous impiety, since it puts a falsehood into the mouth of God, on a subject the most important to mankind.

You may still however endeavour to defend the untenable ground you have taken, by a reference to the seven different churches mentioned in the Apocalypse; to wit, the Church of *Ephesus*, of *Smyrna*, of *Pergamus*, &c.—My Brethren, these were Metropolitan Bishoprics of Asia; and as each was under the direction of one pastor, to whom St. John has given the appellation of *Angel*, so without any improprie-



ty, each might be called a Church. But you are also to observe, that like the other Catholic Metropolitan Sees, being all in one communion, and united to the center of union in the Bishop of Rome, they still formed but *one fold* under *one shepherd*. \*

Before we terminate this subject, it will be proper to show how uniform our doctrine is with that of the ancient fathers of the Christian Church. St. Augustin, speaking of the sects of his time, says, † “Although some indeed believe, that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and that he rose in that same flesh in which he was born and suffered, and that he is born the Son of God, — yet being so separated from his body, which is his Church, that their communion is not entire, but only partial, it is manifest that they are not within the

\* “The seven Churches in Asia Minor were members of the one body of Christ’s visible Church, and therefore in communion with each other, whilst they severally constituted parts of that body.” Davies’s Church Union., p. 276.

† De Unit. Eccl. c. 8.

Catholic Church.”—St. Irenæus also, arguing with the heretic Epiphanius, tells him; \* “though the Church be spread over the whole world, she as carefully preserves the faith and doctrine, as if she inhabited but one house—the same she believes as if she had but one heart and one mind—and the same she uniformly preaches, teaches and delivers, as if she only spoke with one mouth.”

Having then proved by every species of evidence, that UNITY is a distinguishing mark of the true Church of Christ, it remains to determine to which of the congregations of Christians it can be applied. My Brethren, collect them all in your imaginations—let them pass before you in review, and say to which belongs this illustrious title. Among them all you will see, alone, the Catholic Church of Rome, resting her massy pile on the four quarters of the world.—And as

\* Lib. 4.

her deep planted columns rise in the majestic order and stately proportion of a regular hierarchy, her apostolical dome, lifting to the clouds its lofty head, holds every part together in firm union, and like a *city seated on a mountain* visibly displays herself to the universe as the Church of Christ. With one altar, one priesthood, one faith, she gathers within her fold from all tribes and nations,—and from Peru to China, from the northern to the southern pole, her members are subject to the individual authority of her supreme Pastor in the apostolical See of Rome. She is in fact the interpretation of that mystical figure in which Jacob *saw a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven; the angels also of God, ascending and descending by it; and the Lord leaning upon the ladder saying;—thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and in thee and thy seed, all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed.* (Gen. xxviii.)



My Brethren, no other community will be found to possess this glorious badge of distinction,—no other can even presume to claim it ; and as she is sensible of the honour it reflects upon her, never will she be persuaded to resign it. No ! as an ensign she will unfurl it to the view of the whole world and exclaim, I AM ONE. Whilst others contend for an equality of graces and endowments, conscious of her own privileged excellence, she will acknowledge no partner in the spiritual prerogatives she has received from Jesus Christ.—Raised on the foundations of ancient truth and greatness, and consolidated by the firmest bonds, she stands unconnected with any other : and as the sun is distinguished from the other planets by its splendid orb, so shall the Roman Catholic Church be known from all other congregations by this sign of UNITY.

My Brethren, whilst I am directing your attention to the unity of the Roman Catholic Church, I wish particularly to fix it

on the apostolical chair of PETER in the See of ROME \* as the head and center of unity. The supereminence of this See over every other of the christian church,—her venerable antiquity, and the lustre she has in all ages shed upon religion, give her an importance to which no other part of the hierarchy is entitled. But it is in the supreme authority of her Bishop, and in that universal jurisdiction which emanates from him, that we discover that principle of union, which collects and unites the whole fold of Christ under one shepherd. He is to the church what the center of gravity is to matter : and as matter without this principle would instantly dissolve into a shapeless and disorderly mass, so

\* A Protestant writer, forgetting that the Church, as a representative of the mystical *body of Christ*, must have on earth a head as well as members, says: "That which makes all Christian people *one body*, or society, is their being all united under *one* and the same supreme head and governor. Accordingly St. Paul tells us, that as there is but "*one body*," i.e. one church, so there is but "*one Lord*," or *supreme Governor* of that church." (Eph. iv. 4, 5.—Col. i. 13.—Eph. v. 23.) Barwick's Treatise, p. 4.

deprived of this center of union in the Bishop of Rome, the Catholic Church would lose that common tie which binds all her members together, as if in one family, and she would become like to a flock of sheep wandering without a shepherd.\*

My Friends, I could illustrate this truth by the example of an army deprived of its commander; and more especially by a reference to the relative circumstances of the church during the disputed succession to the See of Rome in the 14th century; which was only terminated by the interference of the general council of Constance. My Brethren, limited as I am to time, it

\* It seems that English Protestants have been willing to admit the wisdom of this principle in politics, and to retain it in civil government, though they have renounced it in spiritual concerns. Hence the governments of England, Scotland, Ireland and Hanover, even while distinct, together with the East and West India colonies, the African settlements, and the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, acknowledge the supreme headship of the Crown of England, and consider it necessary to the strength and union of the Empire.



is impossible for me to enter largely into this subject ; but if an anatomical view of the human body is alone sufficient to prove it to be a divine work, I know nothing in the constitution of the church, that shews stronger evidence, than this supremacy, of its having been divinely ordained. *Thou art Peter*, said the Redeemer to his apostle, *and upon this rock I will build my church—Peter feed my lambs—feed my sheep—*(John xxi. 17, 18.) That is, Peter thou shalt be under me the corner stone of my church—the Pastor of my whole flock ; and *whatever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.* (Matt. xviii. 18.)

Whilst contemplating *the wisdom and the power of God* in the formation of his church, we have many advantages, my Brethren, over the first disciples, which fully compensate for those miraculous testimonies which worked such impressions on them. It is then exclusively our pri-

vilege to study the wisdom of God in the grand effects which his plans have produced. We have them before us as standing miracles:—and yet, among them all, I know of none so simple, so efficacious and so magnificent as the perpetual supremacy of Peter's Chair in the Christian Church. When I reflect that for eighteen hundred years, the See of Rome has been the acknowledged oracle of nations,—that under that *rock* every bark has been sheltered from the storms of heresy and schism,—that as blood gushes from the heart, out of her, religion has been continually flowing into the four quarters of the world,—and that she is still the point of union at which we communicate with all other churches within the Christian pale,—I cannot help here confessing a striking evidence both of *the power and the wisdom of God*.

In concluding this discourse then I earnestly exhort you to seek the true Church of Christ. There is no motive which should so powerfully influence persons in

this research as the value of their immortal souls—which should carry them through every difficulty, till falsehood is detected and truth unveiled. If there be a true Church of Christ (and that there is who can doubt) salvation must be sought in it. If this be certain, then God who established that church, must have fixed the marks by which it may be known. In your inquiry, success will not so much depend on talents and labour, as uprightness of heart and goodness of disposition: qualities I believe, which never yet have failed, but soon or late have led to the knowledge of that true religion which conducts to everlasting happiness.





## SERMON XVIII.

SHEWING THE WANT OF UNITY IN THE  
PROTESTANT SECTS.

*Now I beseech you Brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learnt and to avoid them. (Rom. xvi.17.)*

SCHISM used in an ecclesiastical sense, signifies a division in the fold of Christ; and is a principle directly opposed to union and charity. Indeed after having brought forward Protestants themselves, to prove its sinfulness in the sight of God, and with this view published an entire sermon upon that head,\* extracted from the writings of one of their most able divines, it is scarcely necessary for me to seek for further evidence. But as the criminality of schism seems nearly obliterated from the minds of my Protestant

\* See Sermon XI.

countrymen, it will be useful to call their attention more particularly to the point, and to shew the principle of the offence in the moral principle that it violates.

My Brethren, the Redeemer's Church upon earth is the true prototype of his eternal kingdom in heaven ; in which UNION, PEACE, and CHARITY, shall for ever dwell. These characteristics of the Christian Church, are too evidently noticed by the evangelists to require from me many arguments to impress them on your minds. At the birth of the Saviour, who had been prophetically styled by Isaiah *the Prince of Peace*, the angels chanted forth this anthem to the Almighty ; *Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will* : (Luke ii. 14.) and Jesus himself in his farewell address before his passion, told his apostles ; *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you* : (John xiv. 27 ) and after his resurrection we observe he always hailed them

with these words ; *Peace be to you.* (John xx. 21.)

The UNION also of the Church was distinctly prefigured by Jesus Christ under the emblem of the *Vine and the branches* : (John xv. 5.) and though numerous passages might be extracted from the last sermon of the Redeemer, which clearly establish this point, yet one above every other will shew how essential it is to true religion. *I pray not for these only*, said he, meaning his apostles, *but for them also who through their word shall believe in me ; that they all may be ONE as thou Father in me, and I in thee : that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* (John xvii. 20, 21.) Lastly, CHARITY was his own commandment, and to be the distinguishing mark of his disciples. *A new commandment I give unto you*, said he, *that you love one another ; as I have loved you that you also love one another. By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.* (John xiii. 34, 35.)



But, my Brethren, as the only way to determine the true sense of any scriptural passage is to examine it by others of the inspired volume, let us pursue our inquiry into the Epistles of St. Paul, who was undoubtedly a correct interpreter of the Gospel, and you shall see, if I have attempted to draw an undue inference from the passages I have quoted. The apostle commences the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians in these words, *I therefore a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called. With all humility and mildness with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the UNITY OF THE SPIRIT in the BOND OF PEACE.* And to the Corinthians he writes ; *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no SCHISMS among you : but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.* (1 Cor. i. 10.) In the same epistle also,

speaking of the different proportions in which grace is measured out to the faithful, he adds, *but all these things one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members ; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body ; so also is Christ.—But God hath tempered the body together giving to that which wanted, the more abundant honour, that there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer any thing all the members suffer with it, or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Cor. xii. 11, 12, 24, 25, 26.)*

But, my Friends, independently of this clear scriptural evidence, which presents to us all the disciples of Christ in the compact unity of a human body, existing in a state of perpetual peace, union, and charity with each other, this union will be also found by the aid of reason to

be a necessary consequence of that connexion which subsists between the head and members, as will appear by a simple reference to the divine nature of God. For as all the members of Christ are *sanctified in truth*, and truth being a divine attribute is essentially one and unchangeable, the same divine *word which is truth*, (John xvii. 17.) must be *divided out to every one according as he* (the Holy Ghost) *willeth* : (1 Cor. xii. 11.) and therefore as the members stand in one common relationship with Christ, *their head*—they must be in a COMMUNION with each other—according to the logical maxim, that as things resemble a third object, so far they resemble each other.

This communion therefore of the faithful as to doctrine and grace, having been proved both by reason and scripture, constitutes that UNITY of the Church, which is her distinguishing characteristic, essential privilege, and glorious prerogative. It was perpetually secured to her by Jesus



Christ himself at her establishment, when he said, *against her the gates of hell shall never prevail*; and may be regularly traced through every age in her watchful solicitude to discard from her communion the followers of error and the promoters of schism. *A man that is a heretic*, writes the apostle, *after the first and second admonition avoid, knowing that he that is such a one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment.* (Tit. iii. 10, 11.) Heresy, my Friends, is a contumacious opposition to the authority of the Church in some point of doctrine; and is a proceeding highly offensive to God, originating in human pride and resistance, and directly contrary to those principles of PEACE, UNION, and CHARITY, which shall eternally characterize the Church of Christ. The natural consequence of heresy is schism: for where men will not submit to authority, they must necessarily divide against it. Hence the apostle writes, *a man that is a*

*heretic is subverted, sins and stands condemned* by this exercise of *his judgment*; and *after a first and second admonition* is not to be communicated with in spirituals. \* I am not here attempting to affix

\* Protestants may be surprised to read the following language in one of their most esteemed works.—“Now whoever believes not, or at least denies any *essential* part of the Christian faith, IS NOT A CHRISTIAN; and that, not only because he wants a part of that faith which denominates men Christians, but also by disbelieving that part, he does, by necessary consequence, overthrow the whole of Christianity. And hence it is, that *heretics*, who are such as obstinately deny any fundamental article of Christianity, are in scripture ranked with heathens and infidels; for all *true* Christians are required to “*shun and avoid them as unclean persons*,” (Rom. xvi. 17.) and the Governors of the Church are required to anathematize and exclude them from all Christian communion, (Gal. i. 8.) “*to reject them*,” (Tit. iii. 10.) and “*withdraw themselves from them*,” (1 Tim. vi. 5.) that is, to treat them as *heathens and infidels*, who have no right or title to Christian communion: and if heretical persons are to be treated in this manner, then much more so are heretical churches, and consequently as such, must be unqualified for Christian communion.” *Barwick's Treatise*, p. 11.—Notwithstanding Protestants have such dislike to the terms *heretic* and *schismatic* when applied to themselves, it is wonderful to observe, how ready they are in giving these appellations to all who dissent from their *established* Church.

any gloss of my own to the text of this apostle; the ecclesiastical acts of eighteen centuries shall so interpret the sense of this passage as to leave upon the mind of a sincere Christian no doubt of what constitutes formal heresy.

The first heresy which sprang up in the Church is thus described in the Acts of the Apostles : *And some coming down from Judea, taught the brethren, that except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses you cannot be saved.* (Acts xv.) Now, my Brethren, as we here discover a formal imputation against the Church of error in doctrine, up to that period, when these first reformers came forward, saying, *except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved*, the conduct which the apostles pursued on that occasion, is what I wish you to observe with a most careful and attentive eye, in order to mark how perfectly uniform have been the proceedings of their successors in all after ages. For *when Paul and Barnabas had no small*



*contest with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the other side should go up to the apostles and priests to Jerusalem about this question. And the apostles and ancients assembled to consider of this matter, and having condemned that doctrine as contrary to revelation, communicated the decision of the council to the faithful. In the accomplishment of which, Barnabas and Paul, who were specially selected to carry it to the Christians of Antioch, gathering together the multitude, delivered the epistle to them;—and he (Saul) went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients:—and as they passed through the cities, they delivered unto them the decrees for to keep, that were decreed by the apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem. (Acts xvi. 4.)*

Still however, as in defiance of that authority, some persisted to propagate the error, to which they were obstinately attach-

ed, they were cut off from the communion of the faithful, according to the direction of Jesus Christ, saying: *If any one will not hear the Church, let him be considered as a heathen or a publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.)

And writing to the Galatians on this subject, St. Paul tells them, that persons who profess this erroneous doctrine *are made void of Christ—and that he shall profit them nothing.* (Gal. v. 4, 2.) Strong as this

language may sound, you are to observe, that in another part of this same epistle the apostle moreover calls down the maledictions of heaven on himself or any other, who should dare to change that doctrine he had preached. *And though we or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.* (Gal. i. 8.)

Christians, give ear to this solemn imprecation of the apostle, and know, that as the word of truth, it shall be ratified at the last day, to the eternal confusion of those who teach,

as well as those who obstinately adhere to error.

In fact, my Brethren, if we may be permitted to judge of the enormity of a crime from its consequences, there is none before heaven of a blacker die than HERESY. It is permitted indeed, says St. Paul, as a trial for *those who are approved*. *Heresies*, he writes, *there must be, that they also who are approved may be made manifest among you.* (1 Cor. xi. 19.) In taking, therefore, a cursory view of the subsequent history of the Church, three striking epochs present themselves, to which I wish particularly to direct your attention; since a full acquaintance with them will help, either to elucidate the whole, or throw a body of light on those particular points, which events have rendered highly interesting and important.—They are epochs specially marked in the annals of the Church, by the sowing of that cockle or seed of heresy, which spread its roots into a variety of



parts, where again budding, it ramified in different directions, and partially choked the good seed of revelation.

The first of these periods to which I allude, is when Arius, a wicked priest of Alexandria, in the fourth century, dared to attack the doctrine of revelation, in the mystery of the Trinity, opposing upon the strength of his private opinion, the voice of the whole Church of Christ, and *making dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrines he had learnt.* (Rom. xvi. 17.) Scarcely had his impious errors however gone abroad, than far and wide resounded their condemnation. Bishops and pastors declaring them to be in opposition to that doctrine which had been transmitted to them from the apostles, warned their flocks against the wolf in sheep's clothing. (*Matt.* xvii. 15.) Arius, notwithstanding, more versed in the arts of ambition, than the humility of the gospel, contrived to draw numbers over to his party, and thus formally established a heresy, which

for centuries blasted some of the fairest portions of the Church of Christ.

But, my Brethren, what course did the Church pursue on that occasion ? One exactly similar to that adopted by the apostles. Her bishops assembled in the General Council of Nice, condemned the Arian doctrine, and with an anathema denounced to the Christian world as heretics, all those who adhered to it. This solemn decision of the Pastors of the Church was regarded by every disciple of Christ as the voice of that God, who said, *he that hears you, hears me* ; whilst those *who despised it*, were cut off from the communion of the faithful, *being condemned by their own judgment* ; and became the followers of one of those false teachers, against whom the Almighty places us on our guard, when he says, *beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves — by their fruits ye shall know them* \*. (Matt. vii. 15, 16.)

\* There exists a *sect* in the world, to which many are attracted without being aware of its real character ; I mean

The 2d epoch to which I am to direct your attention, is when Photius, an impi-

the *Freemasons*. The members of it are bound together by a mysterious oath of secrecy, and of course it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to become acquainted with all that is acted at their meetings in the *higher* lodges. Enough however may accidentally transpire to enable us to judge of the real character of *Freemasonry*. I do not pretend to any secret information on the subject, but being lately *formally* solicited to become a *Freemason*, by a person standing I believe high in the masonic ranks, my answer returned, was, that could it be made out clearly to me that I was embracing a lawful thing, they should have my consent to become a member.—I must observe, that the reason for which my consent was so earnestly pressed was, that my example would influence a great many others. On which a book was put into my hands giving a detailed account of many of the rites and forms observed in masonic lodges, which I attentively perused. I there noticed the *religious rites*, the *language of the prayers*, and many *insignia* of the *sect*, all detailed: and on returning the work to the owner, my declaration was, that no Christian, no instructed Catholic could lawfully become a *Freemason*. That by what I had read, I clearly perceived, that under the mask of liberality, philanthropy and universal toleration, they existed a sect of *Deists*, who by paying a formal worship to God in one Person, implicitly disown the sacred Trinity;—who practise the rites of *heathens*, by continuing their oblations of fruits;—and who virtually deny JESUS CHRIST, by distinctly affirming, in every form and every expression, that they acknowledge none but the JEHOVAH worshipped from the beginning. If then these words of the



ous courtier of a Greek Emperor, in the 9th century, violently intruded himself into the patriarchal see of Constantinople, and by denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, taught a doctrine *contrary to that which he had learnt*, and there unfurled the standard both of heresy and schism. That intruding bishop, seeing it impossible to obtain from the Church a recognition of his uncanonical appointment, which could alone prove him to have entered into the sheepfold *by the door*, and to be *the shepherd of the sheep*, (John x. 1, 2.) boldly advanced in his career of impiety, and attempted to repel his own sentence of deposition and excommunication, passed in a General Council of the Church, by vainly resorting to a similar denunciation against the Bishop of Rome. No arts were left untried by him, to induce other bishops to espouse his cause, and be-

Redeemer be true, *who is not with me, is against me*, (Matt. xii. 30.) no Christian can lawfully be a *Freemason*, unless he can also lawfully practice *Deism*.—*Vide passim Bar-ruel's Account of Freemasonry.*

ing supported in his usurpation by the countenance of a profligate and worldly emperor, many yielded to the courtly arguments of menaces, flattery, and presents.

You are all aware of the civil divisions of the Eastern and Western Empires, through which innumerable jealousies between the Greeks and Latins had arisen, which were not unfelt even in their religious transactions. The artful Photius contrived to increase these jealousies by every means in his power, and they proved too successful in propagating the Photian heresy and schism. And although, by the death of the heresiarch, a temporary check was put to the spread of error, still it afterwards gradually extended itself through the Greek churches with a few exceptions, and has now involved nearly the whole of imperial Russia, Greece, and Syria, in one common apostacy from the unity of Catholic Communion.

The 3d epoch to which I refer, is when heresy again stalked forth in the 16th cen-

tury in the person of Luther, a German Priest, who, stimulated by the fond ambition of becoming the head of a party, *taught a doctrine contrary to that which he had learnt*, and raising the standard of PROTESTANTISM, vainly attempted to reform a Church, which according to the promise of Jesus Christ, was never to yield to error. (*Matt. xvi. 18.*) In the most extravagant and irreligious language that ever fell from the mouth of man, he directed his attacks against the Head of the Church—against her Sacraments, and against many other points of her Faith,—and trying every question by the weight of his own private opinion, presumed to balance its decisions against the collective authority of Christ's Church. For no sooner was his reformed faith brought before the face of day, than the Pastors of the Church with one voice exclaimed; "it is new, it is contrary to the doctrine of revelation transmitted to us by our predecessors from the apostles." Nay, so general was the condemnation



which re-echoed from East to West, from North to South, that unsupported by a single Prelate, he even boasted that he stood alone against the whole Christian Church\*. What conduct, you again ask, did the Church pursue? The very same, I answer, which she adopted when first arose the heresy of Arius and the Greek schism. The Bishops of the Church assembled in the celebrated General Council of TRENT, condemned the novel doctrine of the REFORMER, as contrary to revelation, and denounced all those as heretics, who obstinately adhered to it:—which, my Brethren, is the most solemn and the most public declaration the Church can make of what is or what is not the doctrine revealed to her by Jesus Christ.

Thus, my Brethren, you perceive how the Church of Christ ever rises above the storm, and whilst she sees those who have abandoned her tost to and fro by every

\* See Pref. to Luther's Works.

wind of doctrine, remains steadily anchored to that faith which was once committed to her. Founded upon a rock, *against her the gates of hell shall never prevail.* (Matt. xvi. 18.)

My reason for confining myself to these three heresies in the history of the Church, is because they may be considered as the parental stocks, from whence the several others drew their existence:—and as Arianism begat Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Monothelitism, &c.—as the schism of Constantinople spread into different parts of the East—so the different sects of Reformists, which have shewn themselves within the two last centuries in this and other countries of Europe, were all engendered in the heresy of Luther.

In presenting to you this picture of events, my design has been to open your understandings to a general and enlarged view of the Christian religion from its earliest period;—but above all to shew you Protestantism in the day of its conception,

that acknowledging its schismatical birth and spurious descent, you may not be deceived by its subsequent hypocritical mask of piety. Various as it is in its forms, innumerable as have been its changes, you may now trace every runner to its common root in Luther; and whether you contemplate that hideous branch into which Calvinism was grafted, or whether you fix your attention upon its less disfigured member the Church of England, or whether you attempt to number those irregular shoots and excrescences which have issued in such varieties from the greater limbs, on all and each of them you may write SCHISMATICAL. I will not here attempt a comparative review of their distinguishing defects, this one noxious property which they all inherit, absolutely vitiates what is otherwise good and fair, and not a fruit can they produce, however inviting in form and lustre, which is not of this schismatical quality and description—*by their fruits ye shall know them;*



*do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles ?* (Matt. vii. 16.)

I have thus, I trust, succeeded in making you acquainted with the schismatical nature of every Protestant church and form of religion ; you have their pedigree before you, and you may trace them to their common stock. In what I have stated I have simply confined myself to facts ; but they are facts so notorious, that I expect not any educated person to call them in question. Yet I am not unsuspicious that some persons will attempt to justify the Lutheran schism, either by maintaining that the wickedness of Catholics was its apology, or by laying the burden of the crime of schism on the other party. My Brethren, unless it be required of me to prove, that when a ship retires from the shore, or a branch is divided from a tree, the shore is not moved from the ship, nor the tree cut from the branch, I think it would scarcely be wise in me to notice so absurd an objection. But since it has

been gravely started by some Protestant divines as a solid argument \*, I shall re-

\* "Let us take a nearer view of the Reformation," writes the Protestant Davies in his Church Union. "About the commencement of the 16th century, when the veil of ignorance, which had long overspread the world, began to be removed, many pious and learned men perceived and protested against the errors and abuses which prevailed amongst the hierarchy of Rome, and took some active measures to restore the church to that height from whence it was fallen.—But the Bishop of Rome not being disposed to a similar reformation, and probably dreading the effect of such fellowship with a society in which his usurpation was disallowed, and his errors exposed, by a formal edict passed an unwarranted censure on the Church of England, and forbad the use of its sacraments to the members of his communion. Hence it evidently follows, that it is not upon us that the charge of separation must attach. *They went out from us*, not we from them. We reformed abuses, which did not originally belong to the constitution of the church. We obeyed the injunction of the Holy Spirit in *remembering from whence we were fallen, repenting and doing the first work*. But the act of separation which the same Spirit expressly forbids, was the act of the Roman Hierarchy. Our reformers therefore cannot be justly charged with the crime of having divided the body of Christ."—PP. 283, 287.—On this passage I must observe that it adopts for the reformers the universal principle of all heretics from the beginning of the church; that they are right in their *own judgment*. And as to the

mark that it goes to prove there was a period, when the entire church of Christ was centered in Luther, and the whole Christian world opposed to him, a schismatical branch. This indeed was the modest claim of Luther and his party. "At first I stood alone \*," said Luther: and Calvin writes, "We were forced to break off from the communion of the whole world †."

Having settled this point, it only remains for me to reply to the other objection; that the corruption and wickedness of Catholics were an apology for the schism. It will not be necessary here to enter into controversy with my adversaries on the

censure passed by the Bishop of Rome, and his prohibition to Catholics to use the sacraments of the reformers, I must remark, that this is a very soft qualification of the unequivocal decrees of the general council of Trent, which formally *anathematized* the new faith of the Reformers:—which moreover stands condemned by numerous decisions of the schismatical Greek Churches. See *Perpetuité de la Foi*.

\* *Primo solus eram*, Pref. tom. I.

† Ep. 14.



wickedness of Catholics. Having already partly answered the objection in a previous discourse, I will, again, simply distinguish between the charge of wickedness brought against individuals, and a charge of wickedness against the Church. For the latter is a blasphemy against Christ himself, whose church is his beloved and glorious spouse, *having neither spot nor wrinkle—but holy and without blemish.* (Ephes. v. 27.) Nay, to maintain the contrary, is to subvert every Christian principle, and to reject every promise and assurance of Jesus Christ. My Brethren, it is a universal maxim that no cause can justify a schism: and you may as well attempt to release yourselves without sin, from the laws of nature, as from the unity of Christ's Church. To every apologist of schism we shall quote the words of the apostle: *if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom nor the church of God.* (1 Cor. xi. 16.) The argument before us then, will be best refuted by the

impartial evidence of Protestants themselves. The learned Protestant Davies says, "it is acknowledged on all hands, that the Church of Rome in its original state, was apostolical and pure:" and even to the present time, "notwithstanding its groundless and extraneous doctrines, it has persevered in the confession of all the fundamental articles of the true Christian faith, contained in that creed which it always held in common, as to its general tenets, with the universal primitive church. And the sacraments ordained by the gospel are here administered by a priesthood, which derives its appointment in uninterrupted succession from the apostles, and its authority from Christ our great master, and from God the Father of all \*."

My Protestant Friends, I now appeal to your honest candour to say, if you can justify to your own consciences your schismatical breach of communion,

\* Church Union, pp. 280, 282.

with the Roman Catholic Church\*. In concluding this instruction, then, I have only to request you to observe, that you

\* Nothing can be stronger than the language of the Fathers against Schismatics. St. Cyprian, who flourished in the third century, writes; "We ought not to communicate with those who are separated from the church. Whoever separates is perverted, sins, and is self-condemned. And in truth can those who rise up against the PONTIFFS of Jesus Christ, and who withdraw from the congregation of his ministers and people, believe, that they are with Jesus Christ? When they condemn the Bishops and abandon the Priests of the Almighty—when they go to that excess of boldness, as to set up another altar besides that of the Catholic Church;—to offer to God with their sinful tongues other prayers, and to profane the sacred host of the Lord by false and unlawful sacrifices, then indeed they turn their arms against the Church; they resist the ordinance of God; they declare war against the holy altar; they rebel against the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; they betray the faith; they commit sacrileges against religion; in short they are disobedient servants, unnatural children, inimical brothers."—*De Unit. Eccles.* St. Augustin in one of his Sermons also, says; "Many heretics, under the mask of the Christian name, deceiving souls, suffer various things; but they are excluded from their reward, because it is not only said, *blessed are those who suffer persecution*, but it is added, *for justice sake*. But where faith is not sound, there cannot be justice; because *the just man lives by faith*. Nor can schismatics promise themselves any share of reward; for likewise where there



have acted in defiance of every principle for which I have been contending in this and the preceding discourse. Your celebrated Davies, whom I just quoted, says, “\* for many centuries prior to the reformation, our ancestors were in communion with the Church of Rome, and in professed subjection to the authority of its Bishop.” Under the specious pretext, therefore, of reforming that Church, (the common pretext set up by all heretics) you have *made dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine you had learnt ;* (Rom. xvi. 17.) and are now *marked and avoided* as heretics, *being condemned by your own judgment.* (Tit. iii. 10, 11.) After bearing false witness of apostacy and idolatry against the church of your fathers, your own party has confessed that in her there

is not charity, there cannot be justice. For the love of our neighbour does not work evil: and if they possessed it, they would not tear in pieces the body of Christ, which is his Church.”—*Ex lib. 1. de Serm. Dom. in Monte, c. 5.*

\* P. 280.

appeared no cause, and you stand guilty of dividing the seamless garment of Jesus Christ \*. You have broken in upon the unity of his fold,—and in opposition to the principle of union, you have chosen that of disunion. Dissension † is the very

\* “Though I sincerely blame,” says the Protestant Thorndike, “imposing new articles on the faith of Christians; yet I must and do truly profess, that I find no position necessary to salvation prohibited, none destructive to salvation enjoined to be believed by the Church of Rome!—and therefore I must necessarily accept it for a true Church; as, in the Church of England, I have always known it accepted; seeing that there can be no question made, but that it continueth the same visible body, by the succession of bishops and laws, that were first founded by the apostles: there remains therefore, in the present Church of Rome the profession of all the faith necessary for the salvation of all Christians to believe, either in point of faith or morals!” *Epilogue*, p. 146.

† The favourite Protestant writer Grotius, and author of the work *De Veritate religionis Christianæ*, says; “Grotius is clearly of opinion, as are many others, that Protestants will never be united with each other, until they are so with those who adhere to the See of Rome; without which no common agreement or government can be expected. He wishes therefore, that the rupture now existing, as well as the occasions of it were removed, amongst the causes of which the supremacy of the Pope, according to the canons

essence of your sect, the soil in which it was planted, and with it every branch and

cannot be reckoned, as Melancthon confesses, who even deems the supremacy necessary for the preservation of unity. Neither is this putting the Church at the Pope's feet, but it is only the ancient and respectable order of things restored again." See *Grotius on Nivetus's Apology*, p. 255. I cannot help also referring to a curious little work entitled, *An Essay towards a Proposal for Catholic Communion*; the author of which says; "I confess I was struck upon reflecting, how far we (Protestants) come short of the beauty and glory of the primitive church. I observed the ancient church, as one body throughout the world, wherein all the national churches were united. Then turning home, I sighed, and cried out to myself, is not this a great blemish to our church, that we are in communion with no part of the christian world? That we are separated from all? That in our island, which is but an atom in comparison to the universe, we are not even united among ourselves, but have as many divisions as can be found in all Christendom besides? Here the love and zeal for that church, in which I ever lived, drew tears from me of compassion and grief; I could not but lament the narrow bounds of its communion."—*Contemplating an union* "inclination first led me to consider this with regard to all that dissent from us at home; but then reflecting that the unity I proposed was of a greater extent than the bounds of our island, and that the communion I desired, and most particular to Christianity, was not national only, but catholic; hence I saw myself obliged to pass seas and examine



bad are infected. I have no pretensions to the gift of prophecy, but having sufficient of the philosopher in me to reason conclusively from principle, I have no hesitation in declaring, that the period will come when Protestantism shall fall the prey to its own native schismatical principle of REFORM. And that reformation incessantly reacting upon itself, will not cease from its work of destruction, till every trace and vestige of a Protestant creed and church have disappeared\*.

the more considerable division from us; I mean whatever is in communion with the See of Rome; and upon a full consideration of each party I observed at length that popery was at the bottom of all; that this kept us divided from so many foreign churches abroad, and that the same was made the ground of our divisions at home: so that this being the true occasion of the narrowness of our communion and of our standing divided from all christian churches, there could be no likelihood of our church being bettered, except there could be some accommodation found in this affair."—*This curious little work should be perused by every Protestant.*

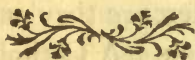
\* Learned Protestants have foreseen this event as well as Catholics. Thorndike says; "It is not out of love for the reformation that I insist on such a principle as may

To conclude with a passage from the eloquent Davies, who apparently forgot that he was auditor as well as orator,—“Such a licentious persuasion,” says he, “is surely a *root of bitterness* which troubles the *flock of Christ*, and whereby *many have been defiled*. It began to vegetate in this country in the days of Elizabeth, and in a more recent age, when men relinquished all respect to civil as well as ecclesiastical authority, it flourished in full luxuriance, and scattered its baneful and pernicious seeds throughout the land. These seeds have been further extended, and their wild produce pampered and cherished, by an abuse of the act of toleration, a law which had for its object the forbearance of persecution, but not the encouragement of schism and dissension.

serve to reunite us with the Church of Rome; being well assured that we can never be well united with ourselves otherwise; and that not only the reformation but our common christianity will be lost in the divisions which will never have an end otherwise.” *Epilogue*, p. 33.

So that in the present day, we have societies of nominal Christians, without an order of duly appointed ministers, without a common liturgy, without a public profession of the faith, and without sacraments. And many amongst us appear even to have forgotten, that separation from the fellowship of the Apostolical Church is in itself a *grievous sin*, expressly forbidden in the gospel of Christ; and that those who hope for salvation without a predominant purpose of obeying his laws, presume beyond what is written, and hope without promise \*."—That by true repentance these may experience the forgiveness of an offended God, is my sincere prayer.

\* Church Union, p. 290.





## SERMON XIX.

### ON THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH.

*Christ loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*  
(Ephes. v. 26, 27.)

NOTHING can be stronger evidence of the infidelity of the present age, and that a numerous portion of Christians have completely lost sight of revelation, than the great indifference they manifest in the choice of religion. A Catholic is the only individual to whom I can extend an exception ; for let any instructed member of our Church be asked why he is a Catholic,

and he will regularly answer, ‘because I am convinced of the truth and sanctity of my religion.’ A reason dictated both by piety and sense. But if I ask any other Christian, why he adheres to one community rather than to another, with a contemptuous smile he will tell me, ‘his reason is his fancy, for there are good and bad of all persuasions.’

Are then, my Brethren, the high sounding arguments of those, who, upon the plea of providing for their own salvation, endeavoured to justify their separation from the Mother Church, dwindled to this admission—they might have been saved as they were?—and of course that there was no necessity for thus dividing the fold of Christ? A necessity either did or did not exist. If it did, they were and continue bound to act by that principle, and not by the whimsical rule of fancy : but if it did not exist, then this schism from the first was a crime of the greatest magnitude, and still retains its original deformity.—But

your assertion is, that there are good and bad of all persuasions : a proposition so loose and vague, however, that it will be necessary for me to notice it, before I proceed any further. That in every society there are persons, who more or less depart from that correct line of proceeding which their own principles and rules trace out for them, is admitted by all, and what Jesus Christ predicted of his own Church. *Many, said he, are called, but few are chosen.* (Matt. xxii. 14.) Catholics therefore, never attempt to deny that there have been, and are multitudes in their own community, whose lives are the very contradiction of that morality their religion requires ;— and who, whilst they profess to receive the holy doctrine of Jesus Christ, follow the licentiousness of the world, and do the works of heathens \*. But the assertion

\* Protestants, who are always by the pharisaical rule tithing *the mint and the annice*, whilst they wholly neglect *the weightier things of the law*, pretend to take a real scandal at those Catholics who occasionally amuse themselves



before us seems to be taken in a greater latitude. It evidently tends to cast upon

in their families, with *cards, music, and other pastimes*, on Sundays. But these same Protestants should recollect, that themselves are charged with *Sabbath-breaking* by their yet more pharisaical brethren among the Puritans and Methodists, for *riding, travelling, sailing, visiting and cooking* on the Lord's day †. These sectarists then should certainly determine among themselves what is, and what is not a breach of the Sabbath, before they interfere with the practices of individuals. The fact is, that Catholics are much more rigid observers of the Sunday, than any description of Protestants; and whilst the latter consider attendance at church-service wholly optional, Catholics regard it as a duty of obligation.

Protestants always contemplate in the Sunday's devo-

† Such is the petty tyranny exercised upon the consciences of these deluded persons by their *preachers*, that individuals among them have owned to me, they were nearly driven by them to distraction; and that it had become a subject of scruple to many well disposed Christians, whether the common domestic duties, such as sweeping a room, making a bed or fire, or foddering cattle be lawful on the Sabbath. One of Cromwel's *saints*, is reported to have knocked out the head of a cask of beer because it *worked* on a Sunday. *Ah!* I may truly exclaim with the Almighty in the words of the prophet, *see where thou hast not prostituted thyself:—nevertheless return to me—and I will give you pastors according to my own heart.* (Jerem. c. 3.)

religion all the guilt of her degenerate children, and to stigmatize her with the

tion, something gloomy, austere and slavish—they view the Sabbath as a day of prayer, of reserve, and recollection,—and their piety is marked by the same gloomy characteristics on Easter-Sunday, as on Good-Friday.

Catholics on the contrary view the Lord's day, both as a day of prayer, and a feast of joy. After mourning over their sins on the Fridays and Saturdays and the other days and seasons of fasting and humiliation according to the spirit of the church, on Sundays they put off their weeds of penance and approach the throne of God with all the *gala* of cheerful devotion. On this day the church chants her *Alleluia*s—intermits her injunctions of severe penance—decks herself out in her best attire—bids her belfries sound their merry peals—and calls her children from their labours to rejoice before the Lord in innocence of heart and piety of soul. She views this day as the figure of heavenly peace, the emblem of eternity, where all labours cease,—where all cares subside in endless love and enjoyment. Hence on this day of the Lord she interdicts her children from servile work, as the appendage of a state of slavery and exile; and conscious that they serve a God of joy, who only calls his creatures to works of penance that he may crown them hereafter, she allows them by social and innocent amusement, to anticipate on earth that feast of piety and bliss, which they will celebrate in heaven in an eternal Sabbath. Hence, after the day has been spent in pious devotion and acts of religion, such as receiving the sacraments, &c. the church

infamy of those crimes she detests and abhors. Let her pastors consume their strength in preaching humility, charity and chastity—she must nevertheless be charged with the iniquity of such as are determined to continue proud, revengeful, and profligate. Let her ministers labour with incessant pains to instruct the illiterate, and unfold to them the pure maxims of Jesus Christ, to her, nevertheless, must equally be ascribed the ignorance and superstitions of those who will not learn,—as well as the impieties of others whom she cannot reform. Yet can justice or common sense approve this mode of reasoning? I am sure no person present would pretend to argue so inconsistently ; since it would lead him to the necessity of denying free-will,—of ultimately laying the scandal upon the divine Founder of religion,—and of

has never objected to the innocent recreation of her children, in social entertainments. But it should be observed, that a recreation tolerated by her, must neither *offend*, *scandalize*, nor *dissipate*.



making God himself responsible for the crimes and vices of men.

As long, therefore, as any practice is not sanctioned by the authority of the Church,—as long as any fault or sin is in direct opposition to what is taught and inculcated by her, it is a departure from every established rule and principle to produce it against religion,—or to assert that our Church is not true and holy, because many of her community are false and vicious. How would you have answered that man, who, before the period of Christianity, had argued against the truth and sanctity of the Jewish Church, from the hypocrisy and wickedness of the Pharisees? What opinion of that man's heart would you form, who should charge St. Paul and the pastors of the primitive Church with the abuses and disorders of the Christians of Corinth? In fact, my Brethren, such is the fallacy of this criterion, that upon such grounds the apostles themselves would stand condemned for the treason of Judas.

Observe therefore, the question is not whether the whole of any community be free from vice;—every where will be found adulterers, every where blasphemers.—No! but it is, whether such a particular doctrine be that which Jesus Christ preached, — whether such a particular Church be the one Christ established; which alone can constitute their title to sanctity.

With respect to the other part of the proposition moreover, that good are to be found in every persuasion, so much inconsistency and contradiction are here involved, that until some further explanation be given, I know not what to offer in reply. Is it the meaning of these persons to say, that we are all right and all wrong? —that light is darkness, and darkness light? Is it their intention to maintain, that Camelion like, revealed religion changes with the dispositions and humours of its professors?—and that, after it has assumed all the variations possible, we are

still to view it as one and the same? Would they contend that revelation is a child of the imagination, rather than a real divine communication?—and that men may become good and holy, by other means than those instituted by Jesus Christ?—My Brethren, such a mode of reasoning, is absolutely to assert, that we are in a labyrinth of errors, like travellers who have wandered from the direct road, and know not what course they are to pursue. Can these persons then be surprised if Catholics do not imitate their folly, and exclaim with them, we are all right, implying we are all wrong? From this we hope to be excused; for although such a proceeding might be praised as the conduct and sentiment of liberality, that surely is a false and mistaken liberality, to which we must sacrifice both reason and judgment;—which attempts to reconcile contradictions, and to associate light and darkness. Nor can he be a Christian in the common acceptance of the word, who maintains a



different opinion. Because as all the authority of the legislature,—all the efforts of human ingenuity would be inadequate to produce an Englishman, who is not a native of these realms, so none of the moral virtues would be sufficient to constitute a Christian who does not profess what Jesus Christ revealed. The catechism defines him to be one who believes and professes the faith and law of Christ. Let us then now endeavour to distinguish the true character of the Christian Church by its faith and law.

As the ideas which men form of sanctity, correspond in a great measure to the lives they lead and their acquaintance with the sacred writings, they who give full scope to their vicious passions, place the perfection of virtue in abstaining from the more atrocious crimes;—others less criminally inclined, make it consist in a strict attention to the moral duties of civil and domestic society :—these are never intemperate, never dishonest, never passion-

ate:—others again, observing all this to fall within the line of absolute obligation, and to be a mere negative in respect to genuine virtue, carry sanctity far above this plain morality, and combine it with those sublime and heroical virtues of Jesus Christ, which only few have the will to attempt, or the courage to practice. Of course it is difficult to express ourselves so as to be at once understood by these three descriptions of persons,—the two first of which are for the most part so wholly sunk in vice, sensuality, and the pleasures of the world, as to be incapable of contemplating real virtue. *The sensual man*, writes St. Paul, *perceiveth not these things which are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand: because it is spiritually examined.* (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

Hence without great care this discourse on sanctity would become absolutely unintelligible to the generality of Christians, who blinded by their own vicious habits

and common example, no longer consider the life of Christ as the model of their own, and the perfection of the law: but have nearly brought back the revealed morality of the Gospel to the simple rule of nature and the dictates of reason. When we speak to them of the civil obligations of a father, of a husband, or of a magistrate, for instance, when we tell them, *ye shall not swear,—ye shall not kill,—ye shall not commit adultery,—ye shall not bear false witness against your neighbour*, they understand us, because this is likewise dictated by the law of nature, impressed upon every man's heart, independently of revelation. But if we talk to these same persons about the subjugation of their passions,—the renunciation of themselves and the world,—of the virtues of chastity, of mortification and humility, oh, we might as well address them in an unknown tongue: they do not understand us they say, they cannot see what good all this is to effect. Verily I believe they do not understand



us, but it is their passions which prevent it;—it is a worldly mind and a carnal heart, which have persuaded them that the morality of the world is the morality of Jesus Christ, and that the virtues of the Christian are no other than those of the heathen. If such have been your sentiments, my Brethren, if such at present are the notions any entertain of christian virtue, permit me, as a minister of Jesus Christ, to tell you, that you are wholly mistaken, and that the morality of the religion you profess, is of a higher order of sanctity, stretching far above the law of nature, and embracing those virtues, which have been taught by the word and practice of God himself.

My Brethren, for any moral action to be distinguished as virtue,—and entitled to the merit of virtue, it is necessary that it be grounded on a divine motive.—I mean, that it have the ordinance or the sanction of the Deity: for every other species of virtue is false and spurious,—

a mere negative in the sight of God, destitute of all positive merit. The essential conditions therefore, or qualifications of virtue, are, that it be raised by the presence of a divine motive and be regulated *according to order*. (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) All virtue, all sanctity, all perfection must have these qualities: and where they are wanting, holiness will be a name without a meaning, and its professors no better than *the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal*. (1 Cor. xiii. 1.) Hence all virtue must be referred to God, as to its beginning and end; and it should never be forgotten, that no virtue will have him for its crown, which has not him for its motive.

This maxim then, when established, will alone enable you to understand the Catholic principle of sanctity and religion; and inform you, why we refuse holiness and theological virtue to every other class of Christians. It will be seen that we deny these attributes to all sectaries, because they want these first principles of piety

and virtue, and constitute private reason and judgment, the motive and the rule of every moral action: which in fact is to reduce the revealed religion of the Messiah to the level of a human code of doctrine—and subverting it as a system of supernatural virtue, to leave it as fluctuating as the ocean, as unfixed as the winds; *tost to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.* (Ephes. iv. 14.)

My Brethren, you should observe that there can exist no species of sanctity but that which is engrafted on the sanctity of Jesus Christ. *He is the vine, we are the branches.* (John xv. 5.) The character of his sanctity exclusively constitutes the sanctity of the new law or of the gospel. Now this evangelical sanctity prescribed by the gospel consists, first, in mortifying human pride, by captivating in all things the *understanding unto the obedience of Christ.* (2 Cor. x. 5.) Secondly, in mortifying the carnal passions or appe-



tites,' by subjugating them to the superior power of the soul. (Rom. vii. 23.) Thirdly, in mortifying the flesh, by renouncing sensual pleasures and making the carnal man obedient to the spiritual. (Rom. viii. 5.) This is the essence of Christian sanctity, and this only will conduct, through Christ, to evangelical perfection. I will now simply ask every individual to say, if in these propositions any thing appears not in unison with the gospel of Jesus? Should he answer in the negative, then I will also subjoin, and finally all this must *be done according to order*: that is, the exercise of these moral virtues must be regulated as we regulate our faith, by submission to the approbation of the Church. Because this divine motive and rule, so essential to Christian virtue, raised in this manner to a supernatural order of merit, wholly distinguish it from other moral actions—which wanting this divine motive remain purely human acts, as unconnected with religious sanctification, as

the instinctive movements of the horse or the mule.

I greatly fear in what I have advanced, I am unintelligible to many Protestants, whose religion is not elevated by the same sublime motive, nor regulated by the same rule; but is rather founded on private judgment and directed by human prudence. To these however I must repeat the declaration of the apostle; *the sensual man perceiveth not these things which are of the spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand: because it is spiritually examined.* (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

I shall now then proceed to shew, that the sublime system of virtue I have described is peculiarly the religion of the Roman Catholic Church;—is practised by her innumerable saints;—and forms exclusively the characteristic of her sanctity.

It is a principle of the Roman Catholic Church, that her moral doctrine, like her revealed faith, is one, unchangeable and

universal; and that to deviate from the line of truth in either, would be an heretical proceeding. Briefly to establish my point however, I shall simply refer you to our preachers,—to our catechisms,—to our prayer-books,—and to our other catholic works of instruction. I refer you to those books, I repeat, which are in general use in the community,—which come to the flock by the hand of the pastor,—and which are those real spiritual *pastures* into which the *sheep* of Christ are conducted by the *shepherd*: to the shepherd *the porter openeth*, says the word, *and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: and when he hath let out his own sheep, he goeth before them; and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.* (John x. 3, 4) I refer you then to these approved evidences, but to others I refer you not; *because they are strangers.* I refer you not to those works which are shelved in the studies of the learned and the curious,—not to those



volumes which are the effusions of vain, or the speculations of philosophical minds, because theirs *is the voice of strangers,—and a stranger the sheep follow not.* (John x. 5.)

Open then, my friends, any of the numerous works I have referred you to, and observe, that in one and all, the piety I have described, is taught, inculcated, and enforced. Neither the boundaries of states,—the vicissitudes of time, nor the diversities of language, occasion any variation in the doctrine of the Catholic Church. But as one soul gives life to the whole body corporal, so one piety animates the whole community spiritual. Indeed, it is a fact, which receives a corroboration strikingly evident from a circumstance that never fails to betray the absence of this unity of doctrine among our Protestant brethren: I mean the bold assertion which I am prepared to make, that no two Protestant preachers have ever uniformly delivered the same doctrine. The

language of their thoughts is as different as the lines of their countenances. Though all may read one common Bible, yet the doctrine preached by each individual is a peculiar gospel. Not so the Catholic missionary. —In this metropolis, my Brethren, and other populous Catholic cities, where there is a numerous body of preachers, you have an opportunity of trying my assertion. Without fear then I boast, that the doctrine I have this day delivered in this metropolis of the British empire, is re-echoed from the capitals of France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and from the very extremities of the two Indies: *the word which you have heard is not ours, but the Father's who sent us.* (John xiv. 24.) Such is the sanctity which the Catholic Church professes ; now let us see how it is illustrated in the lives of her saints.

As the law of Christ consists of a sublime morality, which to a certain extent is of absolute precept, the rest being purely matter of counsel, the first concerns every

individual as a condition for salvation; *if thou wilt enter into life*, said Jesus, *keep the commandments*: whereas the other is proposed in the way of invitation, and through the prospect of an eternal recompence the soul is excited to the practice of it: *but if thou wilt be perfect*, continued the Redeemer, *go and sell what thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.* (Matt. xix. 17, 21.) The one is the principle of Christian virtue: the other is the principle of Christian perfection, and forms that heroical virtue of the saints, I am desirous of exhibiting as the characteristic of their sanctity. For though sanctity absolutely consists of those interior graces and merits with which, in the sight of God, the soul is endowed, yet these being all internal, we are incapable of discerning them otherwise than in the virtues they produce, and which form the characteristic features of the soul. I shall exhibit then the virtues of the saints of the Roman Catholic Church under these three



heads: their heroical fortitude in martyrdom—their heroical constancy in penance—and their heroical love of chastity. By the first they have made manifest the strength of their faith—by the second the excess of their humility—and by the third the purity of their hearts.

My Friends, if I look into the written lives of the saints, or read the histories of the nations of the world, I do not find one which, at some period, has not been a theatre of their martyrdom. In every clime the seed of the gospel has been watered with their blood, and Catholic preachers have sealed the faith they had taught with the generous sacrifice of their lives. We have seen these champions of virtue, in the meridian of youth, bending without reluctance beneath the axe of the executioner, or stretched upon a bed of torments, cheerful in the agonies of death. We have seen a long train of Catholic virgins, surmounting the timidity of their sex, and with unshaken fortitude

confessing their faith in the presence of the fiery stake or torturing rack. We have seen crowds of all ages and conditions *led like sheep to the slaughter*, and displaying every evangelical virtue to their unrelenting persecutors. We have seen, in fine, armies of Catholic missionaries, braving death in every form, and in the cities of China and Japan,—in the forests of America, and on the scaffolds of England, bearing testimony in their blood to that faith which is still preached throughout the Catholic Church.

To our crowded ranks of penitents moreover I am to direct your attention. Behold, then, innumerable recluses, who, retired from the gaieties and allurements of public life, have sedulously occupied themselves in the practice of every virtue which the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ prescribe. Enter into any of the numerous monastic sanctuaries of the Catholic Church, and mark that holy silence and composure of mind, so adapt-

ed to the exercise of interior virtue. Observe that saintly recollection of mind, — that regulated distribution of employment,—that interrupted rest,—those frugal meals,—that subjection to the will of a superior,—that continual attention to prayer, penance, and acts of humility, which characterize a religious and monastic state. These sacred asylums of piety form the brightest jewels in that sacred mantle of Jesus Christ the Catholic Church; —they are the standards of real virtue opposed to the degeneracy of the times, and actually verify the singular prediction of the Almighty to the Jews, recorded in the thirty-fifth chapter of the prophet Jeremiah. These are the heroical servants of God in the Catholic Church, who, renouncing the maxims and the pleasures of the world, have devoted their lives to the exercise of penitential virtue.

But it is chastity that still more eminently distinguishes the sanctity of our saints. For as Jesus Christ has told us, that *blessed*



*are the clean of heart, for they shall see God, (Matt. v. 8.)* and as St. John adds, *that virgins shall follow the Lamb wherever he goes, (Apoc xiv. 4.)*—in those whom virtue has distinguished in the community, and made the favourites of heaven, we expect to see this quality singularly conspicuous, and joined with an ardent love of God, constituting a requisite of sanctity on earth as it does in heaven. Against the legality and holiness of the state of marriage we have nothing to object: this has never been questioned by any rational mind, and it is properly the general condition of man. But in the state of spotless virginity there appears something so pure and perfect, so dignified and exalted, that it is impossible to contemplate a truly chaste soul without sentiments of veneration and esteem\*. It is a state which implies sanctity, which

\* “A chaste soul,” writes St. Bernard, “is by virtue, what an angel is by nature. There is more happiness in the chastity of angels, but there is more courage in that of men.”

assimilates men to the immortal spirits, and has been held in high honour even by pagan nations \*. It is the example, how-

\* *Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat.* (Virg. *Æn.* lib. 6.)—Such is the connexion and consistency of every thing in the order of grace, as well as in the order of nature, that the end and object of the apostolic calling or profession, will alone suffice to prove that the clergy were designed to lead a single life. When we recollect that they are called only to preach and to instruct others, and to carry the Gospel to unconverted nations, it must be evident that a single life alone is suited to this vocation. “We are filled with admiration,” says an esteemed writer, “at the zeal and supernatural courage of the missionaries, when we reflect on the dangers they have encountered, and on what they have suffered in the different parts of the world, whither Christian charity has conducted them. Thousands of Jesuit-Missionaries have been martyred by savage Indians whilst preaching the gospel to them, or have fallen victims to their barbarity on their voyage. Often have these savages pillaged and massacred the christian hamlets. Often have the Missionaries perished, under the most horrible torments: yet these examples, so frequent in every country, have never caused them to relax their zeal. Among Protestants, nothing like this generous intrepidity is to be observed, which exclusively distinguishes the Catholic Clergy. Married pastors have no disposition to abandon their wives and children, and pass beyond the seas to preach to barbarous nations, or to attempt the deliverance of christian captives. The celibacy of

ever, of our divine Saviour, and that decided preference he gave to it, in selecting a

Priests therefore is in these instances, as, in many others, eminently useful both to religion and humanity." *Monumens religieux, par Madame de Genlis. See also the entertaining Accounts of the Missionaries in the Lettres edifiantes.*—If a comparison be ever lawful, and a superiority ever evident, Catholics have a real subject of exultation on two heads, the fidelity of their wives and the piety of their clergy. For whilst chastity is acknowledged to be the ornament of the sex, and spotless manners alone give respectability to the priesthood, it is admitted by the testimony of both Protestants and Catholics, that in the comparison there is no equality. Not that I am blind to exceptions—an exception only confirms the rule. I cannot conceive that any thing more admirable can be said of a body of Clergymen, than what is contained in these few lines extracted from the work of a Protestant, on Canada. Describing the Catholic Clergy, the writer says, "the character which they universally bear throughout Canada, is that which is required of every man who undertakes to dispense the benefits of Christianity to his fellow-creatures. Their lives are exemplary, and it is seldom that any of them can be accused of giving advice which they themselves do not follow." (*Lambert's Travels*, vol. 1. p. 336.) On the superiority of Catholic wives, especially in higher life, I can affirm that Protestant gentlemen are continually admitting it to Catholics, and have often acknowledged it to me individually, with this inconsistent observation however, that it is rather in spite of their religious principles, than through them, that they prove so exemplary and virtuous, and so de-



virgin for his mother, which should recommend it to Christians as the state of perfection, and convince them that it is more holy than the state of marriage. This is corroborated by St. Paul, who, although he lays no obligation upon any, in the most unequivocal terms judges in favour of virginity. *I would, says he, that all men were even as myself; but every one hath his proper gift from God.—Concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord;—but I give counsel;—therefore, both he that*

serving the confidence of their husbands. Lambert in the same manner, whom I just quoted, endeavours to ascribe the edifying deportment of Catholic Clergymen to any thing except their religion. Here however Protestants allow their prejudices absolutely to blind and mislead their judgment from the truth:—and where any have chosen Catholics for their wives, I can assure them, that it is only as long as they continue faithful to their religious principles that they will be found to be patterns of every domestic virtue, and to hold any superiority over their Protestant rivals in the state of wedlock.—On the policy of an *unmarried Clergy*, see Letter the 18th among those addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury under the signature of  
 a CATHOLIC PRIEST.

*giveth his virgin doth well, and he that giveth her not doth better.* (1 Cor. vii. 7, 25, 38.)

On this account, my Brethren, notwithstanding the high veneration professed by the Catholic Church for the state of marriage, consecrated by a sacramental rite, still the virtue of chastity is cherished by her as the diadem of religion, and her saints in every age have distinguished themselves by their attachment to it. Innumerable individuals of both sexes, have resolutely bound themselves by the most solemn vows, to the practice of it in a life of perpetual celibacy, whilst the splendid example of her hierarchy has fixed upon her the astonishment and the admiration of the world. In the exercise of this virtue, the Catholic Church stands so singularly pre-eminent, that it may be considered her own exclusive virtue. Our clerical Protestant adversaries tell us that they do not think proper to practice it—that it is an unnatural virtue! In answer, we defy them

to practice it. They may do the works of penance like ourselves;—they may fast, cut, and torture their bodies;—the heathens of India do as much. They may even die for their religion, offering themselves as victims on a blazing pile. Such immolations are common, and fanatics have done all this. But chastity is above their strength:—in the very attempt we would laugh them to scorn, as Elias jested at the false prophets of Baal. (3 Kings xviii.) It would be the envious request of Simon the magician to the apostles; *give me also this power*, said he: but they answering said, *thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.* (Acts viii. 19, 21.) In short, chastity is not the virtue of men, but the privilege of saints; and men must be saints before they can practice it.

Such, then, my Brethren, are the virtues of the saints of the Catholic Church, or in other words, of those who have walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and have



attained the perfection of the law. Such have been the holy lives of the apostles, martyrs, virgins, and confessors of the primitive Church, and such must be the general character of Christian piety till the end of the world. I am aware, however, that these ideas of sanctity differ widely from those philosophical notions of virtue, which characterize this age of reason. The maxims of human philosophy have supplanted those of the gospel, and vain reason has amused herself in speculating for the temporal happiness of mankind, without thinking of the eternal! She has conceived that every thing should be sacrificed to that object:—that man in his mortal state has reached the maturity of his existence:—and that to multiply his species and provide for the present enjoyment of mind and body, is the noblest occupation of an immortal soul, and most conformable to the views and designs of God. This is her sublime morality!—to fail here is a crime indeed, more execrable

in her eyes than treason, adultery, or fornication ;—to succeed is human perfection.

But how can this view which reason has taken of things in her philosophical transports, be reconciled with the ordinances of Providence? Does the Deity appear to be guided by similar principles, in his moral regulations and government of society? Is it with the view of multiplying the human species, that he frequently sends pestilence, famine and the sword to lay waste whole empires? Is it for no object either here or hereafter, that individuals are often afflicted from their births, and drag through life a miserable existence? Is it for no end that he often permits guilt to triumph over unavenged innocence, and makes the victim drink of the cup of revilement and scorn? Let philosophy reconcile if she can her conceptions of virtue with these evidences of another morality, totally at variance. But the one *is foolishness to her, and she cannot understand because it is spiritually examined.*

(1 Cor. ii. 14.) And on this account our heroes in religious virtue do not appear so illustrious in the eyes of philosophy as to the Christian observer.

Philosophy indeed, the idol of human pride, has a mortal hatred to that fundamental principle of Christian piety, which being *not according to the flesh—though we walk in the flesh—but mighty to God unto the pulling down and destroying of counsels—bringeth into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ.* (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) Philosophy, like the serpent in paradise, flattering our vanity, terms this just homage a meanness of mind, and an act derogatory from the RIGHTS OF MAN. She glories in the emancipation of the mind from the trammels of religious faith! yet no despot so jealous of others liberty—no tyrant so fond of enslaving, as she is of enslaving the whole world to her own opinions. Proud as a child of Lucifer, she will tolerate no other;—martyrdom is the vain act of self murder, where the purple



stream flows not in her cause—whilst she is the only deity to whom obedience is due, to whom a victim can be lawfully immolated. In her behalf men meritoriously waste health, time and fortune,—honourably sacrifice the interests of family, country and king ; and she raises monuments to their memory, and offers without superstition, the incense of her devotions at their shrine. Shall we then, philosophy, become thy votaries? No! God, reason, and sense forbid it. Thy day shall pass, and when thy absurd morality has vanished in eternal night, the virtues of Jesus in his saints shall be crowned with never-ending glory. *Heaven and earth, said he, shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.* (Luke xxi. 33.)

My Brethren, I am aware of the luminous course I have taken, and how little necessary it is to insist, that brilliant is the career which the saints of the Catholic Church have run. Through every virtue their sanctity has blazed with no common

light,—it has shed a splendour round them, and all tribes have pressed forward to confess the holiness of the Catholic Church in the lives of her saints. They have venerated them whilst living as the true servants of God,—in death they have borne lasting testimony to the memory of their virtues, and when no longer associates upon earth, they have addressed with confidence their supplications to them in heaven.

In conclusion then, it will require no very nice observation to determine that the Roman Catholic Church is holy in her doctrine,—holy in her virtues, holy in her saints. Holiness has formed the basis of her precepts and instructions, from the very apostolic age to the present time, and no period can be specified, in which thousands of her children might not be seen treading the paths of the sublimest virtue. \* Her

\* In my Letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury, under the signature of a CATHOLIC PRIEST, I ventured to give the following sketch of the pastoral life of a Catholic Clergyman exercising his functions in the walks of the London

virgins, her martyrs, her confessors, have shone like the stars in the firmament, and

mission. That it contains only a faithful account of what is common throughout the Catholic Church, many have admitted since.

“The Catholic Priests, Winter and Summer, generally rise between the hours of five and seven, though some make a practice of never being in bed after four. The two first hours of the day are devoted to private prayer. Our chapels open *every day in the year*, at half past seven in the morning; and between the hours of eight and twelve you will seldom enter, without seeing a priest at the altar; as they officiate at the different hours, in regular rotation, for the advantage and convenience of the congregation. Nearly the whole of the morning, till one o'clock, may be said to be taken up with prayer, or the instruction of individuals, and often will you see the Priest, who can rise with Pinder in his highest flights, cheerfully descending to the level of the humblest understanding, and with the utmost solicitude and labour, explaining to the infant, or the poor unlettered matron, the first article of the Apostles' Creed.”

“He then issues forth from his chamber, not to distribute his cards at the doors of fashion—nor in quest of invitations to dinners—to balls—or to routs; but to the couches of the sick—to the hovels of the distressed—to loathsome cellars and garrets—to the workhouses and the hospitals; and his chief riches are a cheerful heart and an upright conscience. With these he cheers the drooping and the



the sun itself has not blazed with brighter lustre than their sanctity. Even in this age of dissipation and vice, to how many could she point, who trampling under foot the riches and the pleasures of the world, in humble retirement devote their lives to works of humility, charity,\* and penance.

desponding, and when he can afford a gift, he leaves behind him the generous tribute of his humble means."

"Neither the name of Protestant, Dissenter, or Methodist, repels him; no disorder, however contagious or offensive, nor distance, startles him; at all hours of the night he is called upon, and no Catholic Priest in London ever retires to his bed, without being exposed to be roused from it at any hour to assist the dying. Such is the manner in which they spend their day; the evenings of which are either occupied with private prayer, the preparation of sermons, instructive reading, or in the society of virtuous and respectable friends. With all this toil and labour, their receipts however seldom reach 100 a-year. Nevertheless, they in general continue to distribute several pounds of this sum among the poor."

\* For an account of the charities exercised in the Catholic Church, see Eustace's Description of the Charitable Institutions of Rome, Naples, Milan, and other towns of Italy, in his CLASSICAL TOUR.—A Protestant, after describing

Her attention to good works has indeed occasioned her adversaries injuriously to

some of them at Lisbon, writes : “ Besides the above charitable institutions, there are societies here called the Brotherhood of the *Misericordia*, who are constantly performing acts of charity. These venerable societies protect and comfort the distressed of every religion, sect, or country, within the limits of their observation. They are not content to await the solicitations of the afflicted, but seek them out in their wretched habitations, and administer to their wants. They take orphans, and poor children of indigent parents, under their protection, and rear them till they arrive at a proper age to be sent as apprentices; then they put them under the care of respectable tradesmen, and do not withdraw their guardianship till they are established in their respective trades, unless they forfeit it by ill behaviour. The females, who are reared by them in a similar manner, must be circumspect in their conduct; when their characters are irreproachable, industrious tradesmen make choice of them for their wives, as well for the sake of the dowry to which they are entitled, as to gain the patronage of the brotherhood.”

“ These humane societies visit the goals and hospitals, and send provisions to the different prisoners who have neither money nor friends to support them, and such of them as are detained for the goaler's fees, after being acquitted, are liberated through their humane bounty. When a delinquent is condemned to die, they visit him constantly, they console him and accompany him to the place of exe-

charge her with derogating from the mediatorship of the Son of God. But no ! her faith teaches, that through Jesus Christ alone we are justified, and through him alone will these works be entitled to a reward. Sensible that every grace must come from him, and from his merits alone expecting mercy, they endeavour to render themselves agreeable to their God,

cution, exhorting him to repentance. Their humanity does not rest here ; it extends to the grave ; for the remains of the victim are interred with decency, and a number of masses offered up for his soul. They perform similar offices for every person who dies in indigent circumstances. Indeed it would be almost impossible to enumerate all the beneficent acts of the venerable brotherhood of the *Misericordia* ; acts founded on the purest principles of humanity and religion, without the least alloy of ostentation or hypocrisy. Oh merciful friends of the human species, how great the reward that awaits you when summoned before the great Tribunal of Mercy ! Nor is Lisbon the only place where these pious institutions are established ; they extend to every city and town in Portugal." (Murphy's Travels in Portugal, p. 187).—For a sublime account of the institutions of the Catholic Church, I cannot refer my readers to a more able authority than Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianism*.



by the works which sanctified an Elias, a David, a Baptist, and a Paul, only confidently looking for an encrease of glory hereafter, through the divine assurance, that *not even a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall lose its reward.* (Matt. x. 42.)



## SERMON XX.

SHEWING THE WANT OF SANCTITY IN  
THE PROTESTANT SECTS.

*By their fruits ye shall know them, do men  
gather grapes off thorns, or figs off  
thistles. (Matt. vii. 16.)*

THE term Reformation, as understood by Catholics and Protestants, carries with it two of the most opposite senses that it is possible for language to convey. The signification which the Protestant attaches to it, implies, first, the restoration of real religion, by the subversion of the superstitious and idolatrous practices of popery:—2dly, the triumph of good sense and religious liberty, over the vices, the ignorance, and the tyranny of the priests of the Roman Church:—and thirdly, the

second introduction of the lights of the gospel into the world, in spite of papal opposition, by the exertions of men divinely inspired to unfold the doctrines of truth and salvation.

On the other hand, in the understanding of a Catholic it means, first, a departure from the ancient faith or revealed religion of Jesus Christ.—Secondly, the substitution of one of human institution by Luther and his followers, more agreeable to the passions, and better adapted to the inclinations of the heart —And 3dly, an unjustifiable rebellion against the lawful authority of Christ's Catholic Church, or the rash act of a minority that ran headlong into heresy and schism, in order to revenge themselves upon their opponents. In the whole proceeding to which the expression refers, he maintains that he can discover no sign of the Holy Spirit, whilst every rule, maxim and principle of the gospel reversed in its promoters, speak in it the



sinful deed of LUST, AVARICE, and PRIDE. \*

Thus, my Brethren, the Reformation appearing to Catholics and Protestants in as different and opposite colours as contraries can be viewed in, presents to their consideration as interesting and important a subject as can possibly be brought before a christian assembly, involving as it does the salvation or reprobation of millions. In this alternative therefore let the question rest upon its own merits,—let the tree be proved by its fruits,—let Luther be judged by Luther himself. And should it appear under such circumstances, that the Reformation was a godly work, and that the Holy Ghost co-operated in it, I will be the first to lead the way and place myself in the ranks of the reformed. But if it be proved by itself to have been an ungodly undertaken,—if it betray in its

\* The French always style it *La Reformation pretendue*.

own features these traits of Satan, LUST, AVARICE, and PRIDE, not all the world should induce me to become a party in it, and I counsel you to adopt the same course. *By their fruits, said Jesus Christ, ye shall know them, do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles ?* (Matt. vii. 16.)

In proceeding to the review of the Reformation, we should naturally suppose, in the first place, that men who stood forward the avowed reformers of the Church, would in their own conduct and lives, exhibit a fair specimen of that correct virtue, they were so desirous of communicating to others. Your astonishment then, my Brethren, no doubt will be great when you are informed, that the apostles of the REFORMATION, or the Fathers of the Reformed Church, were the most vicious and depraved characters, — the scandals of Christianity, and the sinks of every abomination. They are universally characterized even by Protestant historians

as VIOLENT, TURBULENT, and IMPETUOUS, and their greatest friends acknowledge, that in their language and actions they were guilty of excesses irreconcilable either with decency or common virtue. With the exception of Melancthon, \* a temporizing character, they were notorious for their immoralities, and it would be difficult for the biographer to decide whether pride, fury, avarice or lust, most predominated in them.† Loosed

\* See Melancthon's name in the subsequent note.

† If the maxim be true, that *no bad tree can produce good fruit*,—and if a just suspicion be attached to every act of a vicious man, we shall be able to form a decided opinion of the Reformation by viewing the characters of its chief promoters.

LUTHER says of himself, “† *I am burnt with the flames of my untamed lust, and the desire of women—I who ought to be fervent in spirit, am fervent in impurity, in sloth, &c.*” (In col. Mens.)—“*Relying on the strong foundation of my learning, I yield not in pride, either to emperor, king, or devil; no, not to the universe itself.*” (Rep. ad Maled. Reg. Aug.)—“*Luther,*” says Hospinian, “*is a man absolutely furious, accustomed to combat the truth, not only unjustly,*

† Whatever is in *Italics* is the very language of the Protestant authorities.



from all the ties of honour, virtue and religion, (of which you shall soon have suf-

*but in contradiction to his own conscience.*—"He is," adds Œcolampadius, "puffed up with arrogance and pride; and seduced by Satan."—"Indeed," says Zuinglius, "so great is the power which Satan possesses over Luther, that he seems to aim at the possession of the whole man." (Resp. ad Con. Lat.) "When abuse and slander," says Nightingale, "had been pretty well lavished and exhausted, LUTHER turned the strains of his invective into the most foul and disgusting railing, employing the lowest figures, the vilest comparisons, and the most execrable puns, which his fertile imagination could devise, to pour contempt and reproach on the head of the Church, insomuch that his language had at times much more the appearance of delirious ravings, than that of a wise and holy reformer of abuses." (Cath. Port. p. 209.)

CALVIN is called by Bucer, "a mere mad dog,—a malevolent man, judging of men by the measure of his love and hatred for them."—VALMER says of him, "he is violent and perverse;" adding, "but so much the better, since violence is necessary to promote our cause."—"Horrible things," writes Schusselfurche, "are objected to him, in public writings, concerning his lasciviousness, his sundry abominable vices, his sodomitical lusts. And it was in punishment of these, and of his profane doctrines that the rod of the divine justice fell so heavily upon him at his death;—for he died in despair blaspheming God." (In Theog. Calv. lib. 2.) He was excommunicated by Luther.

ZUINGLIUS is called by Luther, "a Son of Hell; an associate with Arius; a man undeserving to be prayed for."

ficient evidence)—abandoned to every lawless propensity, these men blasphemed

Of himself he writes, "*hitherto I have found that the gift of chastity is denied me : and I have burnt, oh shame ! so greatly, that I have committed many things indecently.*" (Ep. ad Remp. Helvet.) He was killed in battle fighting for the reformation he had preached. (Hosp. ad. an. 1531.)

MELANCTHON is styled by Illiricus and Armsdorff, "*a Shoe for every foot ; a corrupter of the word of God, a Pelagian.*"—Stancarus calls him, "*the Northern Antichrist.*" He signed the bigamy-indult for the Landgrave of Hesse. (See Bossuet's Hist. of the Var. vol. 1.)

CARLOSTADIUS, if we believe the Lutherans, was a brutal ignorant man, yet artful and turbulent, void of piety and humanity, and more of a Jew than a Christian. Such is the evidence of *Melancthon*. He was in Priest's orders, and at an advanced age, married a Nun of family and great beauty. He was the first among the reformed that thus violated the laws of the Church.

ECOLAMPADIUS was a Brigittine Friar, who quitted his convent late in life, and married a young girl. Erasmus, his great friend, says he was after that no longer the same man. Instead of candour, nothing but artifice and dissimulation could be found in him. (Lib. xiv. Ep. 23. xix. 113.) Luther informs us, he was beaten to death by the devil. (Tr. de Abrog. Miss. P. vii. 230.)

BUCER was an apostate Dominican Friar, that successively took three wives. Calvin says, "*Melancthon and Bucer composed on transubstantiation, equivocal and deceitful forms of faith.*"

against the God of heaven, accused him of tyranny and injustice, and made the

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, was the great German protector of the Reformation. His licentiousness and adulteries were acknowledged by Luther, Melancthon and the rest. He both defended and practised Polygamy. (See Bossuet's Var. of the Prot. Churches, vol. I. p. 271.)

CHRISTIAN the Second set up the Reformation in Denmark. He is signalized in history by his massacring in cold blood all the Swedish nobility, after an entertainment. He was at last exiled for his cruelties, and has been deservedly styled the Nero of the North.—“*It is proper to observe,*” says Mosheim, “*that in all these proceedings Christian the Second was animated by no other motive than that of ambition. It was the prospect of extending his authority, and not a zeal for the advancement of true religion, that gave life to his reformative projects. His very actions, independently of what may be concluded from his known character, evidently shew, that he protected the religion of Luther with no other view, than to rise by it to supremacy, both in church and state, and to find a pretext for depriving the bishops of that overgrown authority, and those ample possessions, which they had gradually usurped, and which he wished to appropriate to himself.*” (Eccles. Hist. vol. iv. p. 82.)

GUSTAVUS ERICSON, a bold and rough soldier, that made his way to the throne of Sweden through blood and battles, established the Reformation in that country at the point of the sword. “Gustavus,” writes Vertot, in his history of the Revolutions in Sweden, “at the head of a body of horse, marched through all the provinces, attended



base passions of individuals the stalking horse of their ambition.

by Olaus Petri, and several other Lutheran doctors, whom he ordered to preach before him in the principal churches.— In all the places through which he passed, he commanded the titles or grants, by which the clergy held their estates, to be brought before him; and either re-united to the crown, or restored to the ancient proprietors or their heirs, such lands as had been granted or bequeathed to the Church since the reign of King Canutson: by which means he recovered from the secular and regular clergy more than two thirds of their revenues, and by computation, seized upon thirteen thousand considerable farms; some of them he re-united to his demesne, bestowing the rest upon his creatures and the principal officers of his army. At the same time he caused the church plate to be every where melted down, and carried to the public treasury or exchequer.”

“In this progress, which may be called an expedition against the clergy, Gustavus gave the last and fatal blow to the Catholic religion: the priests and monks were openly persecuted, and forced to chuse either apostacy or exile; for this was thought the most effectual way to complete the intended revolution in the Swedish Church, since it was impossible for religion to stand after its supporters were removed. Neither was there any need of pretences to excuse the violence of these proceedings, at a time when it was reputed a crime for a clergyman to profess the religion of his ancestors.”

HENRY THE EIGHTH's character is well known. ECHAR

On the geruine principle of Mahomet, whose true philosophical maxims are not to

says of him: "*he has been justly charged with cruelty, rapaciousness, and lust.*" (P. 298.) Heylin adds, "*that he never spared woman in his lust, nor man in his unger.*" (P. 14.)

CRANMER, the great hero of the Reformation in England, and the first Protestant arch-bishop of Canterbury, was the chief promoter of Henry's divorce, and the prime instrument in administering to his lusts.—"*No serious Churchman,*" says Mr. Gilpin, "*one would imagine, could be fond of the idea of administering to the King's passions. It is with concern therefore that we see a man of Dr. Cranmer's integrity and simplicity of manners acting so very out of character, as to compound an affair of this kind, if not with his conscience at least with all delicacy of sentiment, and to parade through Europe in the quality of an ambassador, defending every where the King's pious intentions. But the cause (of the reformation) animated him ! ! ! !*"

After marrying the King to Ann Boleyn, he proved his obsequiousness by annulling the marriage. He next married him to Ann Cleves, and again untied the knot. He had secretly taken a wife himself in Germany, and as he was endeavouring to smuggle her into England, she was discovered in the following ludicrous manner. Having concealed her in a wine-cask, which was landed at Greenwich from shipboard, unfortunately, contrary to particular directions, the cask was placed upon the wharf with the wrong end upwards, by which the prisoner was under the necessity of praying to be released, which led to her disco-

be eclipsed by any of the modern school, the reformers unchained the two leading

very. He was the principal promoter of the rebellion against Queen Mary; and after practising every species of hypocrisy and deceit, suffered at the stake for both treason and heresy.

ELIZABETH was the heroine of the English Reformation. "*She was busy,*" says Whitaker, "*through her whole reign, in robbing the Church of its possessions by every petty trick of sacrilegious imposition which she could play upon it, and by every bolder exertion of sacrilegious authority which she could make against it. Her private life too was stained with gross licentiousness.*"—And having specified it at the end of the 2d vol. of the Vindication of Mary Queen of Scots, he concludes thus: "*Such an immodest, licentious, and dissolute woman was Elizabeth—whom the consenting testimonies of two ages have pronounced the Maiden Queen of Protestantism, and who had the hypocritical audacity to censure a Mary for being what she was herself—what Mary was not, and what she herself was, in all the foulest extremes of the character.—I cannot but observe, says the same Author, with equal indignation and sorrow, that Elizabeth seems to have been, in all her capacities of wickedness, a woman exceedingly wicked; to have united equally the malignant and the sensual corruptions of mankind in her own person; to have had them both in a violent degree; to have superadded the vilest hypocrisy to both, and so to have been a very prodigy of licentiousness, from all.*"

THE DUKE OF SOMERSET, PROTECTOR, was the great spoiler of the English Church under Edward the 6th. After having sacrificed his own brother to his ambition, he was



passions of man, *avarice* and *lust*, and at once let loose upon the catholic world, a band of followers, who soon exhibited in many of the kingdoms of Europe, scenes which were the perfect counterpart of what had been acted in Asia, by the preachers

beheaded for attempting the lives of two of the privy-council. (Baker's Chronicles.) "He who had destroyed so many churches, *invaded the estates of so many cathedrals, deprived so many learned men of the means of a livelihood, did want, or rather did not desire the benefit of the clergy, in his last moments.*" (Heylin's Hist. of Reform. p. 116.)

JOHN KNOX became the hero of the Reformation in Scotland, and proved an ignorant, seditious, turbulent man. Whitaker styles him, "*a deluded idiot in his notions*" "*—a wild raver in his speeches*"—"a son of violence and barbarism, the religious Sachem of religious Mohawks." "In literature and learning," says Stewart, "*his proficiency was slender and moderate, and to philosophy he was altogether a stranger.*" "He was stimulated," says this Historian, "*to cruel devastations and outrages. Charity, moderation, the love of peace, patience, and humanity, were not in the number of his virtues. Though he had arisen to eminence by exclaiming against the persecutions of priests, he was himself a persecutor.*" (Hist. of Scot. vol. 2.)—Dr. Johnson's wish was, that he had been buried "*in the high-way.*" (Boswell's Journal, p. 49.)

Such were the apostles, the fathers, and the heroes of the Protestant Reformed Religion." *Do men, said Jesus Christ, gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles?*

of the Alcoran. As the prophet of Mecca put the mystic volume and the sword into the hands of his Asiatic followers, permitting them in this, and promising them in the next life every gratification of their carnal appetites, yet restricted them from the use of wine, (an easy sacrifice in the burning climates of the south, where seldom any thing but water is drunk)—so the apostle of Wittenberg, adapting his principles to the colder latitudes of northern Europe, and the widely different propensities of its inhabitants, placed the sword and a Bible in the hands of his followers, and unloosed all those restraints which religion had hitherto laid upon the favourite passions of our northern nations, *independence, gluttony, avarice and lust.*—He shewed the spoil which frugal virtue had amassed during the succession of ages, and offering it to his followers, exclaimed, “in this we shall conquer.”\*

\* If one thing can shew more clearly than another, the spirit and the means to which Protestantism owes its original establishment, it is the *spirit*, and the means, which

Whilst Luther however thus gratified the reigning passions of those princes, nobles

are frequently still employed to preserve it in individuals. I have known several young persons, of most innocent manners, and amiable dispositions, who have unbosomed their pious thoughts to their parents, and either urged by some divine grace, or the unaffected devotion of Catholics, have confessed themselves enamoured of their religion and desirous of embracing it. Their minds were yet untainted with the corruptions of the world, and they were only eager to consecrate to God their pure and virtuous hearts, in that faith, which they believed to be the true religion. These pious dispositions were however only met on the part of the parents and friends by bursts of anger and resentment, whilst each persuasive and menacing argument was successively employed to work a change of sentiment.—But when opposition had failed of its effect, and these upright souls were still bent, like birds in a snare upon freeing themselves from the bonds of eternal death, recourse was had to what we may suppose were considered, the more true and genuine arguments of the reformed religion. These zealous advocates of the protestant faith, actually undertook to effect their purpose by corrupting the morals of their own offspring. They led them to every place of dissipation, put the most indecent and licentious books into their hands; and made them associate with the most impure and profligate companions. In fine, a regular conspiracy was laid by Protestant Parents to attach the minds of these innocents to the reformed religion, by corrupting their hearts.—At the same time they were strictly pre-



and subjects, who enlisted in his train, he at the same time, like Mahomet, played off the religious farce of purifying the christian worship from its *defilements*, and as fit objects for the fervent zeal of these reforming Vandals, directed their indignation and fury, against sculpture, painting, music and religious ceremonies: objects for which they had neither national genius nor taste. As Mahomet, in fine, adapted all his maxims and principles to the fer-

vented from perusing any catholic work, from corresponding with any catholic friend, or approaching any catholic chapel. In this state of persecution and restriction however some have found the means of asking me to give them my advice.—It has therefore been, that in their circumstances and state of compulsion, they might consider themselves released by the Church from her ecclesiastical precepts (marked in the Catechism)—but by no means from any of the divine commandments. That although they were prevented from conforming to the true religion exteriorly, they were nevertheless bound to worship Jesus Christ in their hearts, *in spirit and in truth*, and to guard that sanctuary faithfully for him. That faith, purity, and hatred of sin can never be dispensed with, and that meekness, kindness, and forbearance are the only defence christian piety permits.

vid regions of the south, so Luther selected his for the coarse climates of the north, and though the Bible was his text, he neither spoke, wrote nor acted, but with a regard to the feelings and inclinations of his adherents. Such were the genuine principles on which Luther founded his Reformation, and they were too well chosen not to produce a grand effect on the inflammable passions of the human heart, which immediately burst forth with the violence of a general conflagration. Virtue and religion opposed every lawful effort, but were wholly unequal to resist the storm. In the hands of Luther's followers the reformed religion quickly spread into every country of northern Europe, where Gothic civilization and morality remained sufficiently unenlightened to admit it, and like the march of a Mahometan army, its first settlement and progress might be every where traced by the blood of martyrs, the ruin of monasteries, and the devastation of churches; of which the muti-

lated remains yet speak more eloquently than volumes of parchment,—whilst their deserted walls, after the lapse of three centuries, in awful silence, proclaim to the world the rapacious fury that governed the reformers. *By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles?* (Matt. vii. 16.)

My Friends, I fear you will consider me here in the character of a bigotted adversary, acting only with the design of dishonouring the reformation\*.—Against this

\* One of the leading means employed to effect the Reformation, was the calumny poured out against the Catholic Clergy. As the efficacy of this expedient with the multitude was well known to the Reformers,—as it is always a species of logic, which the vulgar more easily understand than genuine argument, the promoters of the Reformation made of it the very best account, and discharged such a torrent of abuse against their adversaries, that did we believe their descriptions, the clerical order was entirely composed of ignorant and vicious priests; and wholly devoted to their own personal interests. But if we consider the BEAUTIFUL CHURCHES raised at that period,—the SCHOOLS which were established,—and the RELIGIOUS HOUSES which were kept open as hospitals for the public, we certainly must allow the Catholic Clergy to have pos-



charge then I must plead the issue of the question, which with one exception I will

sessed, in a very supereminent degree, the virtues of generosity, charity, and benevolence; and that they not only professed a love of learning, but were also most active in providing the means of imparting it to others \*. And with the difficulties before them, which were only removed by the discovery of printing, we have every reason to be astonished at their success. I maintain that our churches and colleges are evidences against the assertions of our adversaries, and prove that the Clergy at that period were neither ignorant nor profligate.—It must be admitted that many of the bishops, forgetting they were

\* Dr. Johnson, reflecting on the devastations of the Reformers, says, “The malignant influence of *Calvinism* has blasted ceremony and decency together; and if the remembrance of papal superstition is obliterated, the monuments of papal piety are likewise effaced. It has been for many years popular to talk of the lazy devotion of the Romish Clergy: over the sleepy laziness of men that erected churches we may indulge our superiority with a new triumph, by comparing it with the fervid activity of those who suffer them to fall.” (*Johnson’s Journey to the Western Islands.*)—Such is the strict attention which Protestants have paid to the injunction of never doing *good works*, that with the exception of founding a few cottage alms-houses, I never witnessed the monumental evidence of a single example of deviation in the whole course of three centuries. Had Protestantism prevailed from the beginning, it is doubtful if we should have had one stone church, or independent living in the land.

now exclusively trust to Protestant hands. And if the picture I have drawn appear

only trustees for the public and religion, often became factious lords of the state, and in their conduct betrayed more of the courtier than of the prelate. I grant that this was both scandalous and indecent, and not less provoking to the monarch than to the nobles. But had kings a just right of complaint, when they were the causes of the scandal?—when in the very priests they selected for the prelacy, they only promoted some factious intriguing favorite?—when they overlooked the truly humble and holy pastor, to exalt the proud? Moreover could the nobles with reason complain when they had the spirit of faction amongst themselves,—and when a turbulent and ferocious aristocracy were eager to enlist a prelate in their train, for the purposes of their own unlawful ambition?—I admit that bishops in our days are never seen to gird on a sword, and march at the head of their vassals,—because this is not the present fashion: but I doubt if they are more free from faction, and state politics in parliament.

Another great subject of complaint was the ignorance and stupidity of the monks and friars. Now certainly if any class, from the monarch to the slave, be decimated till it be freed from all that are ignorant and stupid in it, the number remaining would be very small—and therefore it is not surprising if in monasteries, as well as in the world, there are formed but few distinguished characters. But may we not consider the learning of the first reformers, who for the most part were all apostate friars and priests, a fair sample of the learning and erudition of these con-

only a fair copy of original portraits, I trust I shall stand acquitted in your opi-

vents and religious houses? Whence otherwise did these reformers suddenly from ignorant men become such learned doctors of mankind, as to be qualified to reform the church? Was it heresy that opened their understandings?

Nightingale, in his *Portraiture of the Catholic Church*, says, "Whoever takes the trouble to review the annals of past times, will be easily convinced of the services rendered by those **LEARNED** and **INDEFATIGABLE** monks, not only to religion, but to the cause of general literature, particularly in history; notwithstanding the calumnies and unprincipled aggressions of modern scholiasts, who would refuse to that society not only the merit of learning, but even the attributes of men. The works of the Venerable Bede, St. Bernard, and St. Thomas, though written in times confessedly reputed the most unenlightened of any former or subsequent period, are written in a clear intelligible style, not devoid of elegance, solidity, or depth of judgment. Yet these are the men whom some pretenders to superior refinement brand with infamy and every opprobrious epithet. In this, as in many other cases, we have a most striking instance of human ingratitude: persons who have rendered signal benefits to learning and the fine arts, are accused of having disgraced them by their ignorance and gothic taste; yet, had it not been for the exertion of the Roman monks, St. Augustin and his companions, this country would certainly have been a long time destitute of the blessings of science and true religion.



nions, and that you will rather justify the apostolical candour of a minister of the gospel, than reproach him for partiality.

THESE LEARNED monks introduced into this island the Christian faith, and the Latin language as connected with it, together with the principles of civilization and moral refinement. Shortly after their introduction, seats of learning, religious houses, and temples for divine worship, were erected to secure the advantages of religious and literary instruction. If this had not happened, there would have been neither laws nor any other salutary institution. The great Alfred, the legislator and deliverer of his country, would, perhaps, be little known, had not his intercourse with enlightened monks, both in Rome and this country, enabled him to contrive and execute his plans of justice and beneficence. When the country was harassed and despoiled by the Danes and other barbarians; when every vestige of learning and the arts was almost exterminated in many parts of the country by the periodical inroads of these marauders, some of those repositories of science escaped, and preserved the sacred deposit; yet, in our days, there is nothing so common as loud outcries against monks."

"To know," says a learned Catholic Divine, "what the Catholic Clergy was, especially in France at the beginning of the sixteenth century, read a discourse upon that subject at the end of the seventeenth volume of the History of the Gallican Church. It will be there seen that there was, at that period, a fair sprinkle of learned divines, and that the errors of Protestants were triumphantly refuted as soon as

Burnet describing the Reformation, says\*,—"the open lewdness in which many lived, without shame or remorse, gave great occasion for their adversaries to say, that they were in the right to assert justification without works, since they were to every good work reprobate. Their gross and insatiable scrambling after the goods and wealth that had been dedicated with good designs, without applying any

they appeared, especially by the University of Paris in the year 1521. Mosheim himself has reckoned more than twenty celebrated divines who appeared in that century, many of whom wrote and disputed against Luther during his life-time, though it certainly was not the reformers that taught them divinity. It will be seen by this same history, that the relaxation of morals in the laity as well as in the clergy was not so general nor diffused as their enemies pretend, and that there then lived a great number of most respectable bishops and ecclesiastics; and if a picture equally faithful were drawn of the rest of the Catholic Church, we should be convinced that the reformers acquired proselytes neither by the superiority of their learning, nor by the force of their reasoning, nor by the example of their virtues, but by the attraction of that licentiousness of mind and heart, which they introduced."

\* Hist. of Reform. vol. iii. p. 216.

part of it to the promoting of the Gospel, the instruction of youth, and the relieving of the poor, made all people conclude, that it was for robbery, and not for reformation, that their zeal made them so active.— The irregular and immoral lives of many of the professors of the gospel, gave their enemies great advantage to say, that they ran away from confession, penance, fasting, and prayer, only that they might be under no restraint, but indulge themselves in a licentious, and dissolute course of life. By these things, which were but too visible in some of the more eminent among them, the people were much alienated from them; and as much as they were formerly set against popery, so they grew to have kinder thoughts of it, and to look on all the changes that had been made, as desigus to enrich some vicious courtiers, and to let in an inundation of vice, and wickedness upon the nation.” Again he says\*, “ many private

\* Hist. of Reform. vol. iii. p. 134.



persons' parlours were hung with altar cloths, tables and beds covered with copes, instead of carpets and coverlets ; and many made carousing cups of the sacred chalices, as once Balthazzar celebrated his drunken feasts in the sanctified vessels of the temple. It was a sorry house and not worth naming which had not somewhat of this furniture in it :” \* Echard, another Protestant historian, in his history of England, says, “ in this manner it was that luxury, oppression, and hatred to religion, had overrun the higher ranks of the people, who countenanced the reformers merely to rob the Church.”

Collier, also, in his Ecclesiastical History†, has given us a faithful statement of facts. “ Elizabeth,” says he, “ completed the Reformation by the same methods it was first begun among the common people. When the preachers had inflamed their ignorance, pushed them to sacrilege and fury, and blown them up to

\* Vol. ii. n. 4. p. 238.      † Vol. ii. p. 471.

this pitch of distraction, the pulpit incendiaries cried out, that the places where idols had been worshipped ought to be destroyed by the law of God; and the sparing of them, was reserving the accursed things:—and thus every building with a steeple was a mark of the beast,—a seat of idolatry described by Moses,—a house of devotion for the Amorrites.—By the help of this divinity the Churches were all rased, or battered; the beauty of the great towns scandalously blemished; and the public ornaments of the kingdom laid in rubbish. The communion plate was made prize, and the bells, timber, and lead set to sale in the markets. Registers and libraries were destroyed, and the remains of learning and antiquity thrown into the fire. The grave was no protection against these zealots. They rifled monuments and tombs, did what they could to extinguish the names of those in the other world, and murder them in their memory.—To see, says he, noble structures consecrated to the honour

of the ever blessed Trinity, where all the articles of the Apostles' Creed were professed, the Christian Sacraments administered, and all the inspired writings received as such; places where there was no Polytheism, no addressing devils, no roasting of children, no licentious worship, so much as pretended; in short, where there was no resemblance of a parallel with the heathen idolatry, mentioned in the Old and New Testaments; I say, to see the houses of God thus ravaged and rased, the furniture made plunder, and the Church estates seized, gives a frightful idea of some of these reformers; and to consider the fact without knowing the whole history would almost make a man believe some rough unconverted nation had made an invasion, and carried the country."

Camden likewise tells us, "that sacrilegious avarice ravenously invaded Church livings, colleges, chantries, hospitals, and places dedicated to the poor as things superstitious; ambition and emulation among



the nobility, presumption and disobedience among the common people, grew so extravagant and insolent, that England seemed to be in a downright frenzy \*.”—

But the Protestant Heylin, already quoted, fully accounts for the successful establishment of the Reformation in this country.

“For,” he says †, “though the Parliament consisted of such members as disagreed among themselves in respect of religion; yet they agreed well enough in one common principle, which was to serve the present time, and preserve themselves. For though a great part of the nobility, and not a few of the chief gentry in the House of Commons, were cordially affected to the Church of Rome, yet were they willing to give way to all such acts and statutes as were made against it, out of fear of losing such lands as they were possessed of, if that religion should prevail and get up again, and as for the rest who were either to make or improve their fortunes,

\* Intr. to his Annals of Eliz. p. 5.

† Hist. Ref. p. 48.

there is no question to be made, but that they were resolved to further such a reformation, as should most visibly conduce to the advancement of their several ends." \*

\* In the reformation, the *people*, the *nobles*, and the *princes*, had three distinct objects in view, to reconcile them to it; and to gain their own point, each lent his assistance to the other parties. The people saw that it would afford a fair opportunity for indulging their LUST of licentiousness. "In the year 1525," writes Mosheim, "a prodigious multitude of sedicious fanatics suddenly arose like a whirlwind, in different parts of *Germany*, took arms, united their forces, waged war against the laws, the magistrates, and the empire in general, ravaged the country with fire and sword, and exhibited daily the most horrid spectacles of unrelenting barbarity. The greatest part of this furious and formidable mob was composed of peasants and vassals, who groaned under heavy burthens, and declared they were no longer able to bear the despotic severity of their chiefs; and hence this sedition was called the *rustic war*, or the war of the peasants. But it is also certain, that this motley crowd was intermixed with numbers, who joined in this sedition from different motives, some being impelled by the suggestions of enthusiasm, and others by the profligate and odious view of rapine and plunder, of repairing fortunes ruined by extravagance and dissolute living. At the first breaking out of this war, it seemed to have been kindled only by civil and political views; and agreeable to this, is the general tenor

A similar account of the Reformation in Germany is given by its very apostles.—

of the *declarations* and *manifestoes* that were published by these rioters. The claims they made in these papers related to nothing farther than the diminution of the tasks imposed upon the peasants, and to their obtaining a greater measure of liberty than they had hitherto enjoyed. Religion seemed to be out of the question; at least it was not the object of deliberation or debate. But no sooner had the enthusiast Munzer (or Munster) put himself at the head of this outrageous rabble, than the face of things changed entirely, and by the instigation of this man, who had deceived numbers before this time by his pretended visions and inspirations, the civil commotions in Saxony and Thuringia were soon directed towards a new object, and were turned into a religious war. The sentiments, however, of this seditious and dissolute multitude were greatly divided, and their demands were very different. One part of them pleaded for an exemption from all laws, a licentious immunity from every sort of government; another, less outrageous and extravagant, confined their demands to a diminution of the taxes they were forced to pay, and of the burthens under which they groaned; another insisted upon a new form of religious doctrine, government, and worship, upon the establishment of a pure and unspotted church; and to add weight to this requisition, pretended, that it was suggested by the Holy Ghost, with which they were divinely and miraculously inspired; while a very considerable proportion of this furious rabble were without any distinct view or fixed purpose: and be-



They seem to have lamented the excesses to which themselves had given occasion, and perhaps would have checked them. But when once a rash hand has communicated fire to a pile, it is often beyond the power of human effort to extinguish the spreading flame:—thus the Reforma-

ing infected with the contagious spirit of sedition, and exasperated by the severity of their magistrates and rulers, went on headlong, without reflection or foresight, into every act of violence and cruelty which rebellion and enthusiasm could suggest." (*Eccles. Hist.* vol. 4. p. 64.)

The NOBLES also, perceived that the Reformation would prove a fair opportunity for gratifying their LUST of riches, by the suppression of the convents. Protestants may rest assured, that had not religious vows been viewed as the outworks of rich estates and farms, which the persevering industry of the monks had brought to a state of high cultivation, they never would have been objected to. After the crew had been driven away, the vessel and cargo were supposed to be a lawful seizure.

The PRINCES moreover saw, that the Reformation would be a fair opportunity for gaining an increase of power, as it would raise them to the head of a revolutionary party, and make both nobles and people immediately dependant on them, for their newly acquired possessions and privileges. Till then, the religious orders were a kind of shield between the people and the despotic tyranny of their superiors.

tion outstepped the very Reformers.—  
 “The world,” says Luther, “grows every day worse and worse; it is plain that men are much more covetous, malicious, and resentful, much more unruly, shameful and full of vice, than they were in the time of popery\*.” “Formerly when we were seduced by the Pope, men willingly followed good works, but now all their study is to get every thing to themselves, by exactions, pillage, theft, lying, usury†.”—“It is a wonderful thing,” he adds, “and full of scandal, that from the time when the pure doctrine was first called to light, the world should daily grow worse and worse.‡” Among the immediate disciples of Luther we may place the famous Bucer, who writes thus: “The greater part of the people seem only to have embraced the Gospel, in order to shake off the yoke of discipline, and the obligation of fasting, penance, &c. which lay upon them in the time of popery; and to live at their pleasure, en-

\* Serm. in Postil.

† Serm. in Dom. 6. post Trin.

‡ In Serm. Conviv.

joying their lust and lawless appetites without controul. They therefore lend a willing ear to the doctrine that we are justified by faith alone, and not by good works, having no relish for them \*." Calvin himself says; "of so many thousands seemingly eager in embracing the Gospel, how few have since amended their lives! Nay, to what else does the greater part pretend except by shaking off the heavy yoke of superstition, to launch out more freely into every kind of lasciviousness †."

Hear also the testimony of the learned Erasmus. ‡—"And who," he says, "are these gospel people? Look around you, and shew me one, who has become a better man. Shew me one, who once a glutton, is now turned sober;—one, who before violent, is now meek; one, who before avaricious, is now generous;—one, who before impure, is now chaste;—I can point out multitudes, who are become far worse, than they were before——In their

\* De Relig. Christi. † Ep. 47. lib. 31. ‡ Lib. de Scand.



assemblies you never see any of them heave a sigh, shed a tear, or strike his breast even on the days that are sacred to affliction. Their discourses are little else, but calumnies against the Priesthood. They have abolished confession; and few of them confess their sins, even to God. They have abrogated fasting; and they wallow in sensuality—They have become Epicureans, for fear of being Jews. They have cast off the yoke of human institutions; and along with it, they have shaken off the Lord. So far from being submissive to Bishops, they are disobedient to the civil magistrates. What tumults and seditions mark their conduct! For what trifles do they fly to arms! Saint Paul commanded the first Christians to shun the society of the wicked:—and behold! the reformers seek most, the society of the most corrupted. These are their delight... —The gospel now flourishes, forsooth! because Priests and Monks take wives, in opposition to human laws, and in despite

of their sacred vows. Own it, it is folly to exchange evils for evils; and madness to exchange small evils for great ones." \*

But nothing can more strongly corroborate all I have stated, and demonstrate the principle † on which the reformers pro-

\* "These gossellers," adds the same intelligent Author, "enlightened by the Holy Ghost, want but two things, money and women—the rest the gospel furnishes abundantly. They differ among themselves in regard to their belief; each individual has his private belief. But in regard to Bacchus and Venus they all agree. They have declared open war against fasting and chastity. I have seen an apostate monk with three wives, and a reformed priest espoused to a married woman. The example is common of monks and nuns repudiating each other, with the same levity with which they had married each other." (Ad Frat. Int. Germ.)

† The Rev. Dr. Marsh, Margaret Professor at Cambridge, in his *Letter to the Rev. P. GANDOLPHY, in confutation of the opinion that the vital principle of the Reformation had been conceded to the Church of Rome*, distinctly owns that the Established Church of England is preferred by the Legislature to the Church of Rome, because more congenial to the British Constitution. According to this divine, the *truth* of a religion seems quite a secondary object in the eye of a Protestant Legislature, and his reasoning forms a full and clear elucidation of the views and designs of the reformers. "The chief cause," he writes,  
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ceeded, than the memorable licence which Luther, Melancthon, and the other lead-

“ of misapprehension on this subject must be sought in the common error of confounding two things, which, though *united* in our Church, are in themselves *distinct*, namely, “ *true religion*,” and “ *established religion*.” Men have argued, as if these terms were synonymous ; and hence conclusions, which may be fairly deduced from the one, have been falsely deduced from the other. If the terms were synonymous, truth would be often at variance with itself ; it would apply, to the very same thing, according to mere accident ; and as a religion does not become true, because it is established, so, on the other hand, a religion is not necessarily the established religion because it is the true one. For whether (for the sake of argument) we suppose the Church of England, or the Church of Rome, or the Church of Geneva, or any other Church to be the true and genuine form of Christianity, such form would then of necessity be every where adopted. In fact, the establishment of a religion in any country (as both Bishop Warburton and Dr. Paley have clearly shewn) is not founded in the consideration of its *truth*. The establishment of a religion is an act of the legislature ; but no legislative enactment can decide the question, whether a religion be true or false. *This* question lies *without* the province of the legislature : it is a question of Theology and not of civil government. When a religion is established by law, the honours and emoluments, set apart for the ministers of religion, are exclusively appropriated to one religious party. But the legislature in the *selection* of this party, and in preferring it to all the rest, is guided



ers, gave to the great protector of Protestantism, Philip the Landgrave of Hesse,

solely by the consideration of its superior utility to the state. And, as that religion, which is professed by the most numerous and most powerful party, is likely to be most *useful* to the state, it is *this* party with which the state allies itself, and to which it affords an establishment. The *persons* who profess the religion so established, both may be, and ought to be, directed in their choice, by a belief that the object of their choice is a *true* religion : and so far the truth of a religion may operate *remotely* or *indirectly* on the decision of the legislature. But the *immediate* and *direct* motive, which operates in the establishment of a religion, is its utility to the state ; and that utility (namely to the *state*) will be greater or less in proportion to the number and influence of the party which possesses it. Thus, before the Reformation, the Church of Rome was the established church in this country ; but, when the great body of the people agreed to profess Christianity under a different form, *this* form became the established religion ; and it would *cease* to be the established religion, if at any time the great body of the people should determine to profess Christianity under *another* form."—— This is certainly paying a high compliment to *numbers* at the expense of *truth* ; and Protestants may hence learn how properly they have reposed their confidence. In my second Letter to Dr. Marsh, I made the following observation on this passage : " You have most sensibly and happily admitted, " that *true* religion and *established* religion " are distinct things ; and you very properly add, " that if

by which he was indulged with two wives. Luther had decided that a marriage is dissolved by the parties refusing to live together; and that the deserted man or woman may enter into a new contract. The reformer, however, was now called upon

the terms were synonymous, *truth* would be often at variance with itself; it would apply or not apply, to the very same thing according to mere accident." I shall take the liberty then of placing myself upon this *cardinal* principle, and my object shall be to shew, that although the CATHOLIC RELIGION is not the *established* religion of this country, it is nevertheless the *true* religion. Yourself having admitted the *possibility* of this case, my endeavour shall be to prove the *fact*. Your own distinction relieves me from all squeamishness on this subject; for you say, "that the establishment of religion in any country (as both Bishop Warburton and Dr. Paley have clearly shown) is not founded in the consideration of its *truth*; this question is *without* the province of the legislature: it is a question of theology, and not of civil government."—I then shall undoubtedly argue, not as a *civil lawyer*, or *legislator*, but as a *theologian*, acting within my own just province, and I cannot hesitate in supposing, that all *Protestant theologians* will express an eternal gratitude to me, if my humble efforts should throw some new light upon the subject, and enable them to discover a mistake in their *theological* calculations."—The passage in question was the immediate occasion of my publishing these discourses.

to advance one step further, and allow Philip, as an evangelical cure for his incontinences, the Mahometan privilege of two wives at the same time. The apostolical advice of those reformers is given in these words : “ As to what your Highness says, that it is not possible for you to abstain from this impure life, as long as you have but one wife, we wish you were in a better state before God ;—that you lived with a secure conscience, and laboured for the salvation of your soul, and gave better example to your subjects. But after all, if your Highness is fully resolved to marry a second wife, we judge it ought to be done secretly, as we have said, with respect to the dispensation demanded on the same account. That is, that none but the person you shall wed, and a few trusty persons, know of the matter, and they too obliged to secrecy under the seal of confession. Hence no contradiction, nor scandal of moment, is to be apprehended ; for it is no extraordinary thing for princes



to keep concubines, and though the vulgar should be scandalized thereat, the more intelligent would doubt of the truth, and prudent persons would approve of this moderate kind of life, preferably to adultery and other brutal actions. There is no need of being much concerned for what men will say, provided all goes right with conscience. So far do we approve it.—Your Highness hath therefore in this writing, not only an approbation of us all, in case of necessity, concerning what you desire, but also the reflections we have made thereupon. We beseech you to weigh them as becomes a virtuous, wise, and Christian Prince. We also beg of God to direct all for his glory and your Highness's salvation." This document may be seen at length in Bossuet's account of the variations of the Protestant Church.

We soon after find Luther himself dispensing in his own person with a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, and marrying a

nun ; by which he brought ridicule upon his reformation, and confirmed the general opinion, that his passions only, and not religion, directed him. For as St. Paul says, *he that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided\**. (1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.)

My Brethren, you admit that the picture I have placed before you is very unfriendly to the sanctity of the Reformation in its origin, but still you are inclined to

\* The Catholic Church obliges none of her children to renounce marriage, which she honours as a sacrament : but when they have once made a solemn vow before God to lead a chaste and single life, she insists that they keep that vow unviolated to their death, according to the divine precept. *If any man make a vow to the Lord, or bind himself by an oath ; he shall not make his word void, but shall fulfil all that he promised ;—and if a woman vow any thing, and bind herself with an oath, being in her father's house and but yet a girl in age ; if her father know the vow she hath promised, and the oath wherewith she hath bound her soul, and hold his peace, she shall be bound by the vow.—* (Num. xxx. 3, 4.)

view it more favourably at present. My Friends, has the tree changed in any of its qualities, or has it only ceased for a time to bear its poisonous fruits? Is it in its nature any thing but schismatical? My Brethren, I am willing to allow, that the conduct of modern Protestants is no longer characterized by those excesses which disgraced the earlier periods of the Reformation; but to what should this alteration be ascribed? Not to religion, but rather to a change of circumstances in the reformers;—they have no longer an interest to excite them to these excesses. The ecclesiastical spoil has been already carried off—the reformer is elevated to those same dignities from which he expelled the Catholic:—from carnal indulgence he is no longer restrained, and after completing a religious revolution, he finds a real interest in re-establishing and maintaining order. To succeed in which, the monarch has been compelled to draw tighter all the reins of government,—to keep on foot numerous



standing armies,—and to establish better regulated systems of police. Previous to the Reformation men were almost wholly governed by the mild admonitions of religion; they have been since only controlled by the power of the bayonet. The reformed clergy likewise have found it expedient, (and expedience has always been their golden rule) to resume many of the proscribed Catholic principles, respecting predestination, free-will, the power of resisting grace and good works, &c. and have thus defended the Reformation by principles the very reverse of those on which they established it.

But to convince you that the Reformation never lost any of that spirit it first imbibed—and that it still only wants an object to act upon, I refer you to that more *pure and genuine Protestantism* professed by the *dissenting sects*\*, which shewed itself so evidently in the reigns of

\* They have been hence styled *Puritans*.

the two Charles'\*, above a century after the settlement of the Reformation, and still lives the terror of this Protestant country. Yes the time is coming, when the reformed in this land of Protestantism shall yet drink the bitter cup of their own principles to the very dregs. For if Catholic principles, when directed by Catholics, could not withstand the inroads of fanaticism, weak will they prove indeed when only assumed by Protestants for a temporary purpose.

But to make it still more evident that the altered conduct of the reformers is not to be imputed to the reformed religion, but to principles common to Catholics and all mankind, I will ask the Protestant of the Church of England, to say, if the Calvinist, Socinian, Quaker, or Jew, are not equally moral and well conducted in life? And if they are, to what will he ascribe their orderly deportment? Certainly not to reli-

\* Vide Hume, or any historians of the time.

gion, unless it can be proved, by some new philosophical principle, that contradictory causes produce a common effect: so that the same argument that proves the excellence of the Church of England, will equally prove the excellence of Socinianism, Quakerism, and Judaism; which should undoubtedly suffice to demonstrate its absurdity. The sanctity of the Reformation, even in its most pious followers, has in it nothing that exceeds plain, common, human morality,—nothing but what is equally applicable to the heathen or the Jew,—nothing that even in resemblance partakes of that sublime virtue, which is both preached and practised in the Catholic Church, and which has been described as the characteristic of Catholic sanctity.

My Brethren, my concluding exhortation is in the words of the apostle,—*Save yourselves from this perverse generation.* (Acts ii. 20.) Addressing myself therefore in particular to that part of the community, which continues separated without the pale



of the Catholic Church, I should be the last, notwithstanding what has been said, to charge these persons with a wilful aberration from the path of truth—I should be the last to judge those motives by which their conduct has been regulated. To him who sees into the interior of the human heart, who can weigh the actions of men in the balance of justice—I leave the province of judgment. The preachers should be that of charity and instruction. Knowing therefore how easily men are led astray with the best intentions, I presume not to arraign their motives; but with the Saviour, raising my voice to heaven, exclaim, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* (Luke xxiii. 34.)

At the same time therefore that I wish to spare the feelings of my Protestant neighbour, and to assure him that I have respect for his intentions, and am willing to admit, that much might be said in apology, for the part he is acting in religion, yet I cannot hesitate ur-

gently to call upon him, to enter into judgment with himself, and with a cool and dispassionate mind, to review those motives by which his actions are determined. I cannot hesitate in expressing to him my conviction, that if Protestants had a true insight into the Catholic religion, were they aware that its professors are only called to worship God, in FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY, AND TO FORM THEIR LIVES TO THE VIRTUES OF JESUS CHRIST, in crowds they would return to the bosom of the Catholic Church. For their separation was not so much the act of their own thought as of their guilty advisers, who as in the case of the innocent Susanna, stirred up the misguided indignation of the multitude, and directed it against both truth and virtue. In the language of the prophet then, I exclaim, *return again to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her.* (Dan. xiii. 49.) That your decision may conduct you to eternal happiness is my constant and sincere prayer.

## SERMON XXI.

ON THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH.

*And this gospel of the kingdom, shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations. (Matt. xxiv. 14.)*

THE motives which call upon every Christian to inquire into the nature and principles of his religion are so powerful and pressing, that the man who is so far indifferent to salvation, as to refuse them that attention which such an important object demands, blindly risks the loss of his soul, and will deservedly forfeit what he so little esteems.

My Brethren, unless you have arrived at that point of infidelity which denies the necessity of revealed religion, or at that degree of extravagance and folly, which admires that variety and multitude of sects dispersed throughout the universe,



and which in your own land have multiplied beyond all calculation, you must have discovered the most convincing motives for studying the grounds of revealed religion in general, as well as those particular principles which form the basis of your own faith. Turn, my Brethren, for a while, to the nations of Europe, and attentively consider what is there passing in the theatre of religion. Do you not observe whole bodies of Christians, opposed to each other, on points which they regard as essential to salvation? Do you not, for instance, perceive that the Lutheran and the Calvinist clash together on episcopal authority and justification? Do you not, moreover, see the Protestant charging the Catholic with idolatry and superstition, and on the other hand the Catholic urging against the Protestant a defect of faith, and the crime of schism? Surely then, I say, the individual whose interests are involved, cannot be insensible to such a jar of doctrines, and in order to distinguish

prejudice from evidence,—passion from argument,—or calumny from proof, must see the necessity of trying each and all these points in the scales of candour and impartiality.

My Brethren, the religious controversies which have occupied us for near three centuries, are not disputes for honour and precedency—not amusements for the understanding—and mere matter of argument, but subjects which embrace our dearest interests in futurity :—and if a love of others can influence our conduct in the relatives who surround us, we must see additional motives to make all secure by a fair and just decision.—Can a Christian husband become the enemy of a loving wife, can cruelty sit so deep in his deceitful heart, as to lull her anxious doubts, and induce her to join him in a religion, which he suspects to be false and inefficacious ? Can that mother, who carries her babe upon her breast, call upon her Creator to bless it throughout all eternity, and

yet be indifferent to what is so intimately connected with its future felicity? Unlike those civil contests, where the object in dispute is often of little consequence to the multitude, (though they catch all the ardour that animates their leaders,) here, each one becomes a principal, and between truth and falsehood, between the validity or insufficiency of his faith, are balanced those destinies which will complete his happiness or misery for eternity. It is on these grounds therefore, I conceive, that I am justified in continually calling upon every one, whether Catholic or Protestant, Dissenter or Methodist, to institute a serious inquiry, and prove his religion by such principles as are the sure criterion of truth.

My Brethren, because in religion, as well as in philosophy, there are maxims which are universal, and admit of no dispute,—maxims which serve as lights to the understanding, and often render an obscure subject evident, I lately directed your attention to the Unity and Sanctity of the Church:



and I now wish to call it to her Catholicity ; —a quality, I insist, that will enable you to discern the true fold.—Since, however Christians may be divided on particular articles of faith, one point conceded by all sects and societies is, that the Church of Christ is Catholic. It seems a principle too old to be shaken, too true ever to be forgotten, and will descend with the Apostolic Creed, to the latest period of time. *I believe the holy Catholic Church.*

My Brethren, I shall take it up this day as a distinguishing mark of the Church of Christ ; and trust it will be in my power to point it out as belonging so evidently and exclusively to that congregation of which you are members, that the silly presumption of others will be made apparent, who arrogate to themselves a title not their own. It may be first however necessary to inform the more illiterate part of my flock, who often perhaps use the word Catholic, without knowing its real meaning, that it is of Greek extraction, sig-

nifying universal; and is employed in that sense which is opposite to particular, and which expresses a part only, or section of a whole. Thus the law of nature may be said to be catholic or universal, because it applies to all mankind diffused throughout the universe. But the customs of England or the laws of France are particular, and not catholic, since they concern only those countries to which they immediately belong. I admit that the word CATHOLIC is no where to be found in the sacred text \* ; but like the word TRINITY, has always been used as a traditional term, to express a point of faith clearly laid down in scripture. As the one implies a Godhead in three Persons, so the other denotes universality to be an essential property of truth. It is not therefore the expression, but the point of doctrine which claims your attention. The matter of this discourse I shall therefore present

\* It occurs, however, in the titles of the Epistles of SS. James and Jude.

to you arranged under the form of the following syllogism. That only is the true Church of Church, which is catholic or universal : but the Church of Rome only is catholic or universal ; therefore the Catholic Church of Rome only is the true Church of Christ.

My Brethren, having already established the unity of truth—it necessarily follows that truth is also essentially *Universal* or *Catholic*, like the Deity himself. For to suppose that truth is one, and not universal, would imply as absolute a contradiction, as to assert the unity, and finity of the Supreme Being. For let us penetrate into the highest heavens, or the profoundest depths of the ocean,—let us visit the peasant's cabin, or the grandeur of Cæsar's palace,—let us study the changes of time, or the immutability of eternity,—we shall universally contemplate one and the same God. And as he is the author of all excellence, the source of all perfection, truth, justice, and grace, every where emanate from him as from a common center ; and



like the beams of the meridian Sun, pour their splendid light upon the moral world. Thus God himself reigns in his attributes, and like the Deity, truth, is one and universal.

The Catholicity of truth hence becomes the fundamental principle of the Catholicity of Christ's Church. For as far as truth is diffused, so far does she extend. Inasmuch as truth is absolutely indivisible, so far the Church is essentially universal. Such is the grand principle of Catholicity ; a principle as essential to a true and divine Church, as infinity is essential to the true God. And as the denial of either of the divine attributes, would ultimately lead to the sanction of atheism, so the rejection of the universality of the true Church, would directly authorize infidelity.—By the Catholicity of the true Church, we therefore understand that existence she has had in every period of time since her establishment by Christ ; as also, her extension through all the nations

of the earth. Nor can further argument be required to set forth this necessary characteristic, since I trust it shines by its own light, and must be evident to every one who for a moment adverts to the views and intentions of God, in giving a revealed religion to man. I will therefore waste no time in reasoning upon a point which stands proved in that very commission which the apostles received from their divine Master, shortly before his ascension :—*going therefore*, said he to them, *teach ye all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

It is this diffusion through time and space, which characterizes the Church Catholic, or universal; and being expressly pointed out by Christ in the words just cited, as well as in the text with which I began this discourse, becomes one of those distinguishing properties she can never lose. More strikingly evident however than any other, it is one which so abso-

lutely requires the concurrence of God, that it is impossible it should ever be the appendage of error. Natural religion (by natural I mean that which is not revealed) may certainly vary as to the manner in which homage is paid to the Supreme Being; because it has not been fixed by revelation. For as different means may lead to the same end, and an obligation be discharged in several ways, so in that religion which nature dictates, we may render worship to God by the sacrifice of a victim, the offering of fruits, or the vows of a faithful and unpolluted heart. But where revelation has so fixed and determined the mode of exercising religion, as to be styled revealed religion—when God himself declares that he will accept no other species of homage, and that he *who believes not, shall be condemned*, (Mark xvi. 16.) can it remain doubtful to any one that this religion is a positive law, in its nature universal, and would imply a contradiction, were it subject to variation? Like eternal



truth, which can never deviate from itself, it must sooner cease to exist.

To explain this by an easy example, let us imagine we are all required to copy upon canvass the likeness of one particular object. If we succeed, does it not necessarily follow that the pictures, by their resemblance to the original, must be all like one another, and that they remove from the line of truth in the same proportion as they differ?

Now, my Brethren, since revelation is our common rule, and as the different creeds, or forms of worship by which Christians are directed, are all supposed to be copied from that model, they should certainly resemble, otherwise they cannot be divine; and in the contrast of opposition cannot fail to display the strongest evidence of error and inconsistency.

Truth then being essentially universal, the revealed religion of Jesus Christ consequently assumed that character, and from the first, the Church employed it as a sign

to determine the purity of her doctrine, the authenticity of her faith, and the sanctity of her communion : by this she was to be known from all others, by this to be characterized, as no national nor particular congregation. For when heresy began to appear, as it did in the earliest age, and its professors broached their private opinions to the world, in opposition to the faith and doctrine of the Church, it became requisite to distinguish *truth* by some quality not common to *error*. As error therefore is a moral defect, and like all human efforts necessarily limited, and as universality is the exclusive property of truth, so this quality was assumed and declared to be the grand characteristic of revelation. And hence for the sake of distinction, the true Church was styled *Catholic*, or universal :—and as that profession of faith the apostle's creed was universally received through all the nations of the earth, this qualifying term Catholic, served to denote the true believer among

every class of Christians, as evidently as Christianity distinguished him from Pagans. The above term moreover was constituted the mark of sound faith, by which every article and point of doctrine was to be tried like gold in the furnace; and could they not stand this ordeal of truth, they were rejected as spurious and heretical. However powerful the argument adduced to support a particular sentiment or opinion, however strengthened by authority, learning, and example, its weakness and fallacy were discovered in its defect of Catholicity, or in other words, in the absence of that necessary qualification, that of having always been the uniform and avowed doctrine of the Church.

There may be some, I admit, who will pretend to dispute the correctness of this explanation, which I have attached to the word Catholic; because it would exclude they say numerous bodies of Christians from the pale of the Church.— They would rather prefer, that the word



be interpreted Christian, or be a term to express that compound of churches and sects which constitute Christendom ; hoping that in this incongruous mass theirs also might be comprised.

But this interpretation, my Brethren, of the word Catholic is founded not more on metaphysical demonstration, than on the writings and unanimous declarations of the holy Fathers, who in the very same sense often urged it against the champions of heresy, as an argument which fixes them to a point they can never evade. The high antiquity of the expression may be learnt from a letter of St. Ignatius, who was made Bishop of Antioch only 68 years after the death of Christ. \* “Where Jesus Christ is,” says he, “there also is the Catholic Church:” and in an account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, disciple of St. John the Apostle, extant in Eusebius, we are told, that being about to

\* Ep. ad Smyrn.

expire the illustrious martyr offered up his prayers "for the whole Catholic Church spread throughout the world †."

My Brethren, there are other passages in the holy Fathers which I will also produce for my own justification as well as your instruction, and which clearly declare what they meant by the term Catholic. St. Cyril, who became Bishop of Jerusalem in the year 350, in his eighteenth catechetical instruction says, that "the Church is called Catholic, because she is diffused throughout all nations to the very ends of the earth,—and because she teaches Catholically, that is," he explains "universally, and without any defect or alteration, all points of faith."—And again this Father, more appositely in another part of the same instruction writes thus: "When you go into any city do not inquire for the church, or the house of God, for heretics also have their house of God and a

\* Lib. 4. c. 15.

church ; but ask for the Catholic Church, for that is the true name of that holy Church, which is the mother of us all. If you inquire by this name, no heretic will direct you to his own church."

These are remarkable words, my Friends, plain and distinct as they need to be, and may yet be used as they were near fifteen centuries ago.—To this testimony I can add that of the great St. Augustin, who arguing with some heretics of his time, tells them, \* "If you wish to be considered Catholics, first shew that you are in communion with all nations."

Such then, my Brethren, is the explanation of the word Catholic, conformable with Scripture and the evidences of the Fathers. It is that distinguishing name, which given to the true Church of Christ in the first century of her existence, has been formally recorded in those three professions of faith, the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian

\* De Unit. Eccl.



Creeds ; to which even the Protestant Church of England, in the eighth of her Thirty-nine Articles, bears this honourable testimony. —“These Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by the most certain warrants of holy scripture.”—In the first, therefore, we declare our belief “*in the holy Catholic Church.*” In the second, we profess to believe “*one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Church ;*”—and in the last, solemnly aver that “*Whoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.*”

Having proved to you that Catholicity is that inherent quality which determines the Church of Christ, my second proposition is, that it can only be discovered in the Church of Rome. My Brethren, after what I have just stated, I am aware of the advantageous ground on which I stand with my opponents, when I propose to prove the Church of Rome exclusively Catholic. It is to defend a truth almost

too evident to be denied,—too clear to be doubted,—and nearly too well established ever to need a proof.—For it is impossible to contemplate the Church of Rome, and at the same time to restrain the imagination from penetrating through eighteen centuries to the days of St. Peter, when that apostle first preached the faith of Christ in the capital of the world, and there sealed it in his blood by a glorious martyrdom. At that period of time, the Church of Rome was in communion with all the great churches of the universe, founded by the rest of the apostles, and in conjunction with them formed one Universal Church, teaching all nations.——Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and the other Sees of Asia, were comprehended within the same pale, and from the rising to the setting sun, from the shores of Britain to the southernmost point of Africa—Rome beheld her faith and jurisdiction preached to countries more extended than her empire.

Thus the See of Peter rose in dignity the Metropolitan Church of the Christian world, whilst that universal jurisdiction which this precedency gave it, and which it held through that apostle from Jesus Christ, like rays diverging from a common center, made it the point of union to all other churches.—So that to be in communion with the See of Rome, or the Roman Church, was to be in communion with all the nations of the earth\* ; and to belong to the Catholic as well as to the Roman Church. For Rome professed that faith, preached that doctrine, and participated in those sacraments which were common to the whole Church ; and on the other hand, each particular Church in communion with that of Rome, saw reflected in her, the doctrine and the faith of the universal Church.

\* "The Catholic Church," writes the Protestant Author of the Treatise, "is one by the communion of all its parts ; and therefore they who break communion with any one part, must necessarily disunite themselves from the whole." Barwick's Treat. p. 6.



Such, my Brethren, has ever been the catholicity of the Roman Church, as I am able to shew by the fullest historical evidence, did time permit. But as I cannot recur to that detail of proof, I shall content myself with pointing to those known and authenticated acts in her history, which at different periods clearly demonstrate her title to be Catholic. I allude to those general councils which have been held by the authority of the Roman See, and in which prelates of her communion have assembled from every quarter of the universe. These councils have been numerous, and having nearly followed in succession, stand in every age the recorded monuments of her unceasing Catholicity. By specifying therefore some of the most remarkable, I shall enable you to mark her diffusion through every point of time.

My Brethren, it is universally admitted, that the Church of Rome, when first established by St. Peter, was in communion

with those churches which had been previously founded by the apostles ; she was therefore at that period universal, or what we call Catholic. St. Paul, writing to the ROMANS, says, *your faith is spoken of in the whole world.* (Rom. i. 8.)

Now let us descend three centuries of her duration, and she will still appear Catholic. When Pope Sylvester convened at Nice that celebrated assembly of prelates, who thus by the voice of the universal Church were to determine the doctrine of revelation, concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ, HE, the Bishop of Rome, presided by his legates, and with those Fathers, who had been collected from the known countries of the globe, subscribed to that Catholic profession of faith, styled the Nicene Creed.

Let us traverse in thought three centuries more, and we shall arrive at that period when the British nation was converted from Paganism by the Church of Rome. It has been questioned by some, whether

the Roman Church has not ceased to be Catholic at that time. But that she was still the Church in communion with all nations, is evident from the sixth general Council, which shortly after assembled at Constantinople. In this Council Pope Agatho presided by his three legates, who were met by *a hundred and sixty-one* prelates of the church, and together signed their dogmatical decree, which declared that *Peter spoke by the lips of Agatho*\*.—From this period continuing our review, we reach the twelfth century, which I notice for its four general Councils held at

\* This declaration was in consequence of the complete refutation of the Monothelite heresy by the Pope, in a letter addressed to the Emperor; in which he writes, “the Catholic world acknowledges this Church (the Church of Rome) to be the mother and mistress of all other churches. Its primacy is derived from St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, to whom Jesus Christ entrusted the direction of the whole flock, with an assurance that his faith should never fail.”—On this letter being laid before the council, the fathers unanimously exclaimed, “*Peter has spoken by the lips of Agatho.*”



Rome, in the second of which near one thousand bishops were convened. The Church of Rome was therefore still Catholic.

Proceeding down the lapse of three more ages, we come to that interesting epoch when the last and famous General Council of the Church assembled in the city of Trent, with the circumstances of which, my Brethren, you are, or undoubtedly ought to be acquainted. Luther in the madness of his heart proclaimed the Church of Rome corrupted, and no longer the Catholic Church of Christ. To remove this scandal from the world, and that the light of truth might shine to all nations, the Roman Pontiff summoned all the Bishops of the Church to a general council, that they might give evidence of their own doctrine, and bear testimony to that of Rome. My Brethren, behold these prelates, to the number of many hundreds assembling from the four quarters of the globe, bringing with them that faith they

had preached to the universe, which was the faith of Rome. Was not this at once a demonstration of the Catholicity of the Roman Church, as well as of the purity of her faith? Did she not then *appear the city seated upon a mountain*, the visible Church of all nations, represented by these Fathers in communion with her?—and when the council condemned the doctrine of Luther and his associates, as new, false, and contrary to scripture and revelation, was not that the decision of the Universal Church? If it was not, I know not what could deserve that appellation.

Against the irreformable decrees of this council, to which Luther and his followers had appealed, the reformers entered their vain *Protest*, from whence they acquired the name of *Protestants*\*, which very

\* On this occasion the reformers only confirmed to themselves this title, which they had first acquired by this *Protest* against the Diet of *Spire* in the year 1529. "The power," says Mosheim, "which had been granted by the former Diet to every prince of managing ecclesiastical matters as they thought proper, until the meeting of a general

term signifies *not Catholic*. Whilst their opposition served but to render the judgment passed more formal and conspicuous, because as the apostle says, *heresies there must be, that they also who are approved may be made manifest*. (1 Cor. xi. 19.)—The object for which this sacred senate assembled being therefore effected, (which was to hold up the lamp of revealed

council, was now revoked by a majority of votes, and not only so, but every change was declared unlawful that should be introduced into the doctrine, discipline, or worship of the established religion, before the determination of the approaching council was known.—Therefore when the princes and members now mentioned (the Elector of Saxony, Landgrave of Hesse, and some others) found that all their arguments and remonstrances made no impression—they entered a solemn *protest* against this decree on the 29th of April, and appealed to the Emperor and a future council." (Eccles. Hist. vol. iv. p. 72.) Many Protestants have sufficient candour to acknowledge the impropriety of first recognizing and then rejecting—of first appealing to, and then *protesting* against an authority. How often however in controversy with Catholics do these same Protestants begin, by appealing to scripture, and end, by *protesting* against its authority! How can they justify this conduct?



truth to the world, and to determine by a positive decree every agitated point of doctrine, that all *might see who had eyes, and might hear who could understand*), a termination was put to this celebrated council in the year 1563; when the Fathers again diffused themselves over all the nations of the earth, bearing evidence to the purity, and the sanctity of the faith of Rome. Continuing from that period to the present time in communion with that See, they have never ceased to teach the same doctrine, preach the same faith, and administer the same sacraments, to every tribe and people; by which they still practically demonstrate the Church of Rome to be Catholic.

But my proposition was, that she is exclusively Catholic, because she only has visibly existed in every age, since her establishment by St. Peter, and has never ceased to be diffused over all nations, by her communion with them. History enables us to perceive, that every sect of

Christians out of communion with the Church of Rome, has had but a passing existence. All have originated in a separation from her, have lived their time, like other human institutions, and have died away. Arianism, which was formed into a Church in the fourth century, and had more widely extended itself than any heresy of the present day, disappeared in the seventh.—This was followed by Nestorianism, which, in its turn, gave place to Eutychianism. Next, came forth the schismatical Church of Greece, a thousand years too late to be Catholic ; and last of all was brought upon the stage of Europe, the *reformed Church* of Luther, which has since undergone a variety of changes.

Here, my Brethren, we discover no trace of Catholicity. As these societies were composed of the followers of individuals, so also were they confined to a narrow territory, and seldom stretched beyond a province, or a kingdom ; witness

the Kirk of Scotland, and the Church of England. The very name of Catholic is wanting to them. To be sure, these latter have not yet sunk into total oblivion, beneath the weight of time, like the reformed churches of more early date, but if we reflect upon that general cry, of "the Church is in danger," which has been so often raised, and the alarm excited for their fate, we may conclude that perpetuity is not a property that belongs to them. Such apprehensions at once betray a weak foundation, and a tendency to ruin.

Nor can I help here contrasting the feelings manifested by Catholics, when infidelity a few years back breaking forth in France, threatened to sweep the religion of Rome from the face of the earth. When her Temples lay smoaking, her Priests massacred, or fugitives in a foreign land;—when hosts were leagued against her, and the Venerable Pontiff was seen dragged from her altars, to perish by the hands of infidels, there were some, who in the joy



of their hearts exclaimed, "Behold the proud Church of Rome is fallen !" "She who sat as a Queen for eighteen hundred years, is now no more !" "Humbled in her Chief, she is become the footstool of her enemies."—My Brethren, we smiled at their ignorance, we pitied their delusion. Instead of trembling beneath her aged columns, and exclaiming "the Church is in danger !" we told them that as the Church of Rome was no human establishment, so by no human endeavours could it be overthrown. We admitted the violence of the assault directed against her, but observed, this would only prove that she was immoveably fixed, and immortally established. That when the fury of her enemies should be exhausted, she would appear to stand, like the unshaken oak, ready to brave another tempest.—*Upon this rock,* said Jesus Christ, *I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.* (Matt. xvi. 18.)

Have not events then shewn that our

confidence was well grounded? Yes, my Brethren, and upon the strength of this assurance we build our faith, that amidst the wreck of ages, and the fall of empires, the Church of Rome shall stand until *the consummation of the world.* (Matt. xxviii. 20.)



## SERMON XXII.

SHewing THE WANT OF CATHOLICITY  
IN THE PROTESTANT SECTS.

*I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world. (Rom. i. 8.)*

THE exclusive title of the Church of Rome to Catholicity has been already established in my last discourse. The argument by which it was supported, not less conclusive than concise,—not less evident than irrefutable, ran as follows : That only is the true Church of Christ, which is Catholic, or universal. But the Church of Rome only is Catholic, or universal, therefore the Church of Rome only is the true Catholic Church of Christ.

The Church Catholic then implies that community, that faith, that doctrine, that



worship, which existing in every period of time since the first preaching of Christianity by the apostles, have extended through all the nations of the earth. Now, my Friends, if the catholicity of the Church of Rome have been satisfactorily proved, the argument directly tends to this evident conclusion, that every other church is schismatical. For to conceive two catholicities, would be as illogical and contradictory a sentiment, as to contend for two infinities : and as the infinity of God directly establishes his unity, so the catholicity of the Church of Rome incontestably proves, that her universality is individual, and consequently that every other church is a schismatical congregation.

Now, my Brethren, after having laid down this clear, logical inference as a fundamental principle, can it be necessary to produce other arguments to shew that the Protestant Sects, either individually or collectively considered, are not catholic? Can it be necessary to prove that they are

no part of that whole from which they are separated\*? Can it be necessary to prove in these days of light and philosophical wisdom, that two are not one? Heavens! we are explaining principles in this enlightened age, that our Fathers would have blushed to have been ignorant of.—Where then will Protestants place the catholicity of the reformed religion?—Will they center it in Luther, who boasted, that for a long time he stood *alone* opposed to the whole Christian Church?—or will they place it in that chosen band of his associates, on whom as on the wicked inhabitants of Babel, the Lord poured forth the spirit of discord, that they and their descendants might proclaim to generations, in perpetual schism their own disgrace?—or will they give it to our national Church, and maintain that the religion of an island is universal? Of an island did I say? is there a single county that professes it?

\* See note, page 193.

Nay, has it a single family of its pale,  
*with one heart and one mind?*

There are adversaries, I know, who assert that however glorious has shone the catholicity of the Church of Rome during many ages,—nevertheless since the period of the Reformation the growing multitude of her opponents has nearly eclipsed her ancient celebrity, and has now left her, distinguished only for her venerable antiquity.—Here however I am again ready to meet them.—I affirm and am able to prove, that her catholicity at this day, is as palpably evident, as the non-catholicity of every other community, and stands a truth as little to be questioned, as the physical existence of India or China. The catholicity of the Church of Rome actually appears in that immense population of Christians of every country in communion with her, in her doctrine, in her sacraments, and in her form of worship,—in all which she is completely Catholic, or universal.



My Brethren, were we to make the manners and customs of any particular nation, a rule for judging the rest of the universe, we should soon discover that we had adopted a fallacious mode of reasoning, and that partial information can never be made a fair ground for a general conclusion. It is only by taking a wide view of mankind that we are enabled to know it,-- and it is only by balancing our ideas, and comparing facts that we are enabled to decide correctly. This maxim should be revered in religion not less than in philosophy : I would neither pass an opinion on Protestantism, by what I observed at Rome, nor confound the whole christian world with what is acting in Great Britain. Were an individual to traverse the counties of England, and visit its metropolis with a mind solely attentive to religion, the issue of his limited observations undoubtedly would be, that the Roman Catholic Church is a rare and scanty sect, little worthy of the name it bears. No other sentiment

indeed can that Englishman have, who only forms his ideas from what he observes in his own country : for his judgment must necessarily be as confined as his island. But let him open his understanding to the light of the hemisphere;—let him search the records of his ancestors, and he will observe that the scattered congregations of our community are the precious remains of once Catholic Britain. Since the period when it formed a part of the Catholic world, it is true, our ranks are sadly thinned, but we live to tell what our country was.—There is a glory in the reflection of being the few, who stood firm in the hour of trial, and have seen a whole people fall beneath the storm.—The day existed when every sanctuary of the land contained an altar of the great Catholic Church, and the apostolic faith of Rome was preached throughout the realm. The very walls of our Cathedrals, and Minsters yet stand to attest that England was Catholic, before it was Protestant, and

plainly speak the splendour of our ancient worship. Not yet three centuries have rolled over our heads, since first the standard of Protestantism was unfurled on the British shores, where Catholicity had been seated from the early dawn of Christianity. We remain a rare exception to the national apostacy, and retain that faith which all Britain professed for a thousand years before. And even if this remnant of Catholic England were dispossessed of the religion of their forefathers, the statutes of parliament, history, and tradition proclaim it; whilst the mournful ruins of sacred monuments, in funereal majesty, bid the awe-struck traveller observe the violence by which it was effected.

Let but the deluded crowd therefore, whom prejudice has taught to hate us, look back upon their ancestors, through a few generations, and they will observe them tracing with us the same common path towards heaven, and in their dying entreaties calling upon their descendants never to



abandon it.—They will behold them united with us, in a communion of the same prayers, of the same sacraments, and of the same worship, till that fatal day, when their posterity, blinded by interest, were persuaded that the doctrine of Luther was more orthodox than that of the Catholic Church.—With error, every species of moral confusion entered amongst them. Ere that period, none had ever heard of Protestant, Dissenter, Methodist, Anabaptist, Independant, Quaker, and that list of reformers, for which this country is now become the scorn and the pity of the whole Christian world. Neither Jew nor Greek is able to describe the fanatical mummerly with which it abounds :—justly we may say, it is delivered over by the hand of God a prey to dissension and folly, in punishment of its pride.—*They, says the Prophet, are all confounded and ashamed ; the forgers of errors are gone together into confusion.* (Isa. xlv. 16.)

So much for this country, which has

ceased to be Catholic. But if the name of Britain be blotted out of the Catholic world by her breach of communion with the Church of Rome, it surely demonstrates a renunciation of that faith which had been originally preached by our ancestors.—It is, therefore, for you, my Brethren, attentively to examine what proportion of the universe is still comprehended in it. Pass to Ireland, then, and there you will discover a people almost wholly Catholic, who, to the number of five millions, yet hold fast the religion of their forefathers. I am correct in calling it a whole people, for the few Protestant inhabitants it contains emigrated from this country.— Yes, Ireland is Catholic to the very heart ; and I must observe, that she presents the solitary instance of an entire nation nobly sacrificing their property, their liberty, independence, and honours, for the preservation of that religion, which the once Catholic clergy and people of this land sacrilegiously exchanged for

gold. — Riches and religion, it seems, operated on the two countries with an inverse influence ; the one gave up property for religion ; the other surrendered religion for the sake of property. A question of which, however, Jesus Christ, I believe, has fully determined the merits. *He that loveth, says he, father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me ; and he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it.* (Matt. x .37, 38, 39.)

My Brethren, we must sacrifice every interest rather than renounce our faith—we must sacrifice every temporal consideration in order to recover it when lost. *For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?* (Matt. xvi. 26.)

These reflections premised, from Catholic Ireland extend your observations to the continent of Europe. Enter its



western extremity, and view the countries of Portugal and Spain, wholly Catholic :—traverse the extended empire of France, formed of kingdoms and states comprehending an immense population entirely Catholic :—visit Italy, and its adjacent islands, where the faith of the universe has been preached from the days of the apostle St. Peter to the present time :—travel back through the provinces of ancient Greece, abounding with Catholics :—observe the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, together with the principalities of Germany, almost wholly Catholic :—extend your inquiries to the empire of Austria, and the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, also Catholic :—look to those provinces which formerly composed the Catholic kingdom of Poland ; and thence drawing a cursory view over Russia, Prussia, Holland, and other states of the North, such a body of Catholics will appear scattered over these widely extended countries, notwithstanding the established faith of the latter is

Protestant, that you will be ready to admit the accuracy of the calculation of the illustrious statesman Charles Fox, who computed in the British Parliament "three fourths of the inhabitants of Europe to be in communion with the Church of Rome\*.

Having surveyed Europe, my Brethren, now stretch across the Atlantic Ocean to America, and contemplate that immense continent, whose coasts are many thousand miles in length, almost wholly peopled with Catholics ; for if we except that small portion which was once an English colony, the religion of Rome is the only religion of the new world. Numerous nations of Indians have received it, and we cannot name a civilized part in which it is not both preached and established. The British province of Quebec is entirely Catholic,—so is the country of Mexico, and the whole of the southern peninsula, which, together with the great American Islands, presents a Catholic population as

\* *On the Catholic Question*, 1805.

innumerable as the sand of the sea. Leaving the continent of America, pass to that of Asia, traverse the territory of China, and observe how widely Catholicity is spread over that extended empire. Visit the shores of India, explore Persia, penetrate into Armenia, Syria, and the interior Asiatic provinces,—every where you will find multitudes communicating with the See of Rome.—In fine, wherever the Christian name is diffused among civilized mankind, even in the sands of Egypt, the plains of Ethiopia, and along the coasts of Africa, the Catholicity of the Roman Church will be distinguished—*their sound*, says the prophet, *hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* (Ps. xviii. 5.)

My Brethren, the Church of Rome presents to the attentive eye an immense and innumerable multitude or society of Christians, spread over every part of the universe. They inhabit every clime, and people every shore, yet are peculiar to no



country, and thus they are Catholic. Now to balance against this Universal Church, any national congregation, such as the Church of England, or any other Protestant sect, would be more absurd than to place in comparison, the confined territory of Britain, with the boundaries of all nations. Well then may I address you in the words of the apostle, *I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world.* (Rom. i. 8.)

We might suppose then, that Protestants opposing this mass of sentiment, and claiming Catholicity for themselves, would have some fixed and certain principles; and that their new work would not want the common evidences of rectitude and truth.\* Yet the Protestant Mosheim informs us, that at the very outset of the Reformation

\* "Our Articles and Liturgy," says the present Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Tomline, "do not correspond with the sentiments of any of the eminent reformers on the continent; or with the Creeds of any of the Protestant Churches, which are there established." (Charge an. 1803.)

Luther offered to desist from his pretensions, and actually made submissions.\*

My Brethren, so unsteady have been the principles of the Reformers, that not one can be named which they have not successively maintained and opposed,—extolled and condemned. Even in the torrent of calumnies which they have never ceased to pour forth upon the Catholic Church, her Clergy, and her religious rites and institutions, there is not a point in which they have not contradicted their own assertions, and justified their adversaries. I appeal to their incessant strifes and dissensions among one another, in which one party is continually defending itself by a recourse to some Catholic principle.

“ \* He not only offered to preserve a profound silence for the future with respect to indulgences, provided the same condition was imposed upon his adversaries; he went much farther; he proposed writing an humble, submissive letter to the Pope, acknowledging that he had carried his zeal and animosity too far; and such a letter he wrote soon after the conference at *Altenburgh*.” (Eccle. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 41.)

We have seen the members of the Church of England for instance, appealing to tradition against the Calvinists, and thus defending the established liturgy against the attacks of their own brethren. We have seen, in fine, every religious rite and form, every article of faith, successively attacked, defended, surrendered and reclaimed by the reformers—until it is absolutely impossible to describe the religious principles of a Protestant: which again are so unfixed and variable as not even to be known to himself. I will carry the point farther, and maintain that he has none: for in fact, it is this absence of principle—this *tabula rasa* of religion which is to be honoured with the golden title of TOLERATION. *By their fruits ye shall know them.*

With the exception of what the laws of decency and society require, the reformed religion has done away every species of restraint, and the human soul is left



by her, more completely at large in the moral than in the physical world. She may rove in thought as the night bird ranges through the skies;—she may flirt in faith as the fishes sport upon the waters.—She is not more controuled by precept than the actions of the savage;—her own will becomes her only binding law.—Acting upon these principles, the Protestant offers his Sunday devotions at church, or reads a sermon at home. He communicates once in a month, or not once in his life.—He makes himself a member of the established church, or seeks salvation in the Predestinarianism of Calvin, or embraces faith and righteousness in the deliriums of Methodism. He now rejects, now admits the sacramental mysteries—maintains their number to be two, three, or more—insists upon the necessity of baptism, yet supposes not that those will forfeit salvation who die without it. He admits the Athanasian and apostles' creeds,

as the sum of his faith ; although he sees nothing wrong in his Protestant friends open renunciation of them. He has united himself in the bonds of wedlock ; yet he doubts not the fornicator will experience mercy at the hands of God, and pass without any intermediate state, from this earth into eternal happiness.—He observes in the scriptures the divine injunctions to practice self-abnegation—yet his only study is, to enjoy the world.—He is aware that the law of God is immutable, but he can present it to his conscience in every variety of form.—Hence the different moral systems inculcated by Protestant moralists !—hence their fanciful speculations on every subject !—hence every half century presents us with a new species of Protestantism !

Thus after having incessantly contended with one another during three centuries, without coming to an agreement upon one point, these reformers at length observing that their divisions were only multiplying

by disputes, and that they had no real arms either for defence or attack, have come to the resolution of tolerating one another in peace, and having thus made a virtue of necessity, claim to themselves a quality to which they have no right.—Indeed, this toleration, so extolled as the genuine feature of Protestantism, and the result of true wisdom and moderation, is in itself the mere effect of political interest, or rather of indifference to all religion. And it is this amalgamation of principle and faith, this Protestantism of the nineteenth century, which has been termed by one of the most distinguished Divines \* of the Established Church *generalized Protestantism*. —But I may fairly ask, why has the term *generalized* been substituted for Catholic; for in more instances than one, I have lately observed that the Established Church is characterized as part of the *general* Church?—My Friends, I will answer for Protestants; it is because, at length they

\* Dr. Marsh, Margaret Professor of Cambridge.



perceive the absurdity of claiming a name and title \* which no one will give them, which they never apply to themselves without a blush,—and which they know sits so ill upon them. They see the folly of making themselves any longer the sport and the bye-word of infidels—and the jest of their more honest or profane brethren. — To the question then—What means a *general Church*? I answer, it means any thing but Catholic or Universal. Thus we say the land of England is *generally* rich, though not so universally:—the British army is generally brave, though not so universally:—because we are acquainted with individuals in it who have proved themselves cowards—as we also know districts of Bri-

\* A learned Catholic writes: “Catholic is our family name, come down from the earliest ages. We do not object to the adjunct of *Roman*, because it shews the connection we hold with our ecclesiastical head; otherwise the single world Catholic ever has distinguished us from all other Christian societies. ‘*Christian is my name, Catholic my surname*,’—was said by a Spanish Bishop against the Novatians as far back as the fourth century.” *Rev. Jos. Berington’s Letters to the Rev. John Evans.*

tish soil notoriously poor.—The assertion therefore, that the Established Protestant Church is a part of the *general* Church, is a plain admission by Protestants, that she is no part of the *Catholic* Church. For in logic, *generals* and *universals* are much more distinct, than even different species of animals in the physical world.

But, my Brethren, if the Catholicity of the Church of Rome be apparent in that multitude of all nations and tongues, united in communion with her, this quality is rendered still more evidently divine, by the still wider spread of her doctrine, her sacraments, and her worship through the Christian world. Christendom, or the great mass of the Christian world, may be classed in two divisions: that which is Catholic, or orthodox, and that which is not. Now although the former constitutes a majority, nevertheless the remaining part, composed of those various sects, which at different periods have dissented on some article of

faith from the Catholic Church, forms a considerable proportion. They exist under the distinctive appellations of Arian, Nestorian, Eutychian, Protestant, &c, the word Catholic always denoting those, whose faith and religion have never changed. It is a singular circumstance, then, deserving of most particular notice, that supposing any question of doctrine, of faith, or of worship, to be brought before an assembly or council of these *heterodox*, it would be universally decided according to the faith and doctrine of the Church of Rome. Is not this to judge a man out of his own mouth? Is not this decisive of the truth and soundness of Catholicity?

Let us suppose then assembled in our presence all the Christians of the world, out of the communion of the Roman Catholic Church; I mean the Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the schismatic Greeks, the Cophts, the Jacobites, the Church of England Protestants, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists: though undoubtedly the three



latter might be confounded under the name of Protestant. From each of these sects let a certain number of representatives be selected, finally to decide by a plurality of voices every question brought before this tribunal.—Their judgment will always be given conformably to the doctrine of the Church of Rome. If the mystery of the Incarnation for instance be debated, every point will be decided against the Nestorian, and the Eutychian, according to the faith of the Church of Rome. If the procession of the third person be discussed, it will be determined against the Greek, according to the doctrine of the same Church. If the divine authority of Bishops be disputed, judgment will be given against the Calvinist, in conformity with what is taught by the Church of Rome.

I trust the catholicity of the Church of Rome is now made evident to the humblest capacity. The dispersion of her numerous members through all nations, is a

sufficient testimony ; but when her very adversaries become unwilling witnesses of the truth of her faith, her doctrine, her sacraments, and her worship, it is rendered as evident as the light of the meridian sun. For if there be such a thing as opinion among mankind, it will be admitted that it shews itself here, in a signal manner, and if it be ever worthy of attention, it is when it comes so unanimously before us. Never did truth prevail more completely than on this occasion, nor can she gain a more real victory, than when her adversaries come forward to proclaim her triumph.

On what you have heard this day (and the decision would be similar on Confession, Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Prayer for the Dead \*)

\* There are three questions I should imagine our adversaries would be eager to see brought before an assembly of this description, in which not one Roman Catholic is supposed to be present. These three questions are, auricular confession, the sacrifice of the mass, and prayer for the dead. First then, as to confession—On this subject,

the only reflection I offer is, either these points of doctrine have been revealed

the Nestorian, together with the Eutychian, will immediately assert, that it has always been considered by their respective churches, as a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ;—that their doctrine and practice, as far as this question is concerned, are the same as in the Latin or Roman Church, and that an article of faith so universally admitted till the 16th century, plainly and evidently declares itself to be that revealed word of God, announced by his apostles throughout the world. Moreover they would shew, that the Cophts of Egypt, and every eastern sect, yet retain it among the number of their sacraments. The schismatic Greek would make a similar profession, and on the part of all the followers of Photius would contend, that far from viewing that sacramental mystery as a folly, they consider it the ordinary mean left to Christians by Jesus Christ, of recovering lost grace after baptism. Nay, he would bid the whole assembly advert, that the Protestant Church of England, in the purest days of its reformation, never departed from this doctrine. Plurality of voices must therefore positively decide the point according to the faith of the Church of Rome.

The next subject to be debated is transubstantiation, or the mystery of the real presence in the sacrament of communion. Immediately the Greek will rise, and produce that memorable testimony of the faith of his church, which was given by the patriarch of Constantinople in the year 1672, at the head of a synod composed of forty-one schismatical Greek bishops. It states: "We believe, and we confess, without any doubt in the tremendous sacra-



to the whole world, by God himself through the ministry of his apostles,

ment of the eucharist, that the living body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is invisibly present, by a real presence in the sacrament. For when the celebrating priest says, after the words of our Lord, "make this bread the true body of your Christ," and that which is in the chalice, "the true blood of your Christ, changing them by your holy spirit," then by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in a supernatural and ineffable manner, the bread is really, truly, and properly changed into the real body of Jesus Christ, and the wine into the real blood. And we believe that it is Jesus Christ himself entire, who offers, and is offered,—who is received and distributed to all,—and who is entirely eaten in an impassible manner.—This sacrament is worthy of a true adoration, because we adore, with the same honour that is due to God, the divine body of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and he is offered in sacrifice for all orthodox Christians, both *living and dead* \*.—Next the Nestorian will pass judgment on this question, by appealing to the celebrated profession of faith drawn up at Jerusalem, in a general synod of the Eastern Church, in the year 1672, and transmitted by the Patriarch to Louis XIVth, king of France, to be deposited in the royal library, there to remain an eternal monument before God and man, of the faith of those who signed it. The Patriarch addresses it under this form:—"Dositheus, by the grace of God Patriarch of Jerusalem to all those who inquire and wish to know what is the

\* See the *Document in Perpetuité de la Foi*, vol. iii. p. 451.

when he first founded his Church, and have since been handed down to the pre-

faith and the religion of the Greeks, or of the Eastern Church.—We believe that Jesus Christ is present in the sacrament of the eucharist, not by a representation or by image, or by a superabundant grace as in the other sacraments, nor by a simple presence, as some fathers have said of baptism, nor by a conjunction, so that the divinity of the Word is hypostatically united to the bread of the eucharist, as the Lutherans very ignorantly and contemptibly suppose, but truly and really. So that after the consecration of the bread and wine, the bread is changed, transubstantiated, transformed, and converted into the true body of Jesus Christ—and the wine is changed and transubstantiated into the same, and true blood of our Saviour, which has been spilt for the life of the world.—Moreover we believe, that after the consecration of the bread and wine, the substance of the bread and wine no longer remains, but the very body and blood of Jesus Christ under the appearance and figure of bread and wine, that is to say, under the accidents of bread and wine.”—The Patriarch and the Synod add in fine, “That the Nestorians, the Armenians, the Cophts, the Syrians, the Ethiopians,—(who have each a particular heresy), are nevertheless agreed with us, in all we have said.\*” My Brethren, transubstantiation must therefore be decided against the Protestant according to the Catholic faith of Rome.

It only now remains to determine the question of the

\* See the *Document in Perpetuité de la Foi*, vol. iii. p. 509.

sent generation by tradition, or the whole world is afflicted with the most extra-

Sacrifice of the Mass, which I believe you will admit has been already virtually settled in the decision just passed on transubstantiation.—Still, my Brethren, the most explicit testimony may be produced. By the synodical document last quoted, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, declares, “that there is a true and propitiatory sacrifice, which is offered for all pious persons *living* and *dead*, and for the good of all, as is expressly signified, in the prayers of the sacrifice.”—The Oriental Church of Antioch, would also be produced, as an important witness, for by a synodical deed of her Patriarch, signed and approved by six archbishops, and a great number of ecclesiastics, in the year 1673, and transmitted in form to the French court, at the request of Louis the XIVth, she determines the matter, in these precise words. “We believe that the Mass is a real unbloody sacrifice, as much more perfect than the sacrifices which were offered in the law of Moses, as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, is more perfect than the lambs who have no rational souls.—And we offer this unbloody Sacrifice to the Most High for the pardon of the sins of the *living* and the *dead*, as we have learnt from the apostles who were instructed by the Messiah.”\*—The Nestorians would urge, in evidence, one more testimony, that of the Clergy and Bishop of Diabeker, in Syria, who in the year 1669, sent a public attestation

\* See the *Schefmaker's Letters to a Magistrate of Strasburg*.



gant folly. But if we are all to be condemned as a race of idiots, or madmen,

also of their faith to the court of France, which was afterwards deposited in the Royal Library. The words of the document are, "We have learnt with extreme astonishment that a certain Son of Satan\* of the French nation, has dared atrociously to injure the Eastern Church, by falsely charging her with disbelieving, and not receiving the most grand mystery of the sacred oblation. We firmly believe, that after the words of Jesus Christ, which the priest has pronounced, with the authority he has received from heaven, the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the substance of the wine is changed into the substance of his precious blood, so that there remains nothing of the bread and wine, but the accidents of the one and the other.—We offer this body crucified for us, and this blood spilt for many, and for us, that is to say, for the *living*, and for the *dead*, for the remission of their sins, and the punishment they have deserved. We anathematize those who say the contrary, and who do not receive this doctrine."† My Brethren, such would be the sentiment professed by three-fourths of this assembly, on the Sacrifice of the Mass: their verdict must, therefore, be against the Protestant, conformably with the apostolical faith of Rome.

The only point of difference which remains to prevent

\* Claude, a famous Calvinist.

† *Lettres de Shefmaker*, vol. i. p. 19.

by a few philosophers who pretend to greater endowments of reason than their fellow creatures, do let them in their wis-

this assembly dissolving itself completely Catholic or united to the whole Church, is the acknowledgment of a Primacy, in the Patriarchal successor of St. Peter. Yet even this, it will be necessary for them to concede, if they wish to be consistent with themselves. For having at first only opposed it indirectly, or on the principle of his having fallen into error as they conceived, on some article of faith, they are again obliged absolutely to admit it, now that they have fully acquitted him by their own judgment.—But the proposition of transferring such an authority to a civil magistrate or king, is a chimerical idea, that would be scouted by all, and such as could only have originated in the mind of an anti-christian Socinian.

For this very curious and ingenious argument I am wholly indebted to the learned and revered prelate Dr. Gibson, Vicar Ap. of the northern district—who was once able, by it, to make a most powerful impression on the mind of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, whilst discussing with him the subject of religion. The Right Rev. Dr. Gibson has given to the English public a work, entitled, *THE TRUTH OF THE CATHOLIC RELIGION PROVED FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES*, by M. de Mahis, in one octavo volume; than which there cannot be a more concise and useful compendium of Catholic faith. It both teaches the Catholic and instructs the Protestant; which should be the characteristic features of every religious work published in this country.

dom inform us how it happened that all men got such an equal share of insanity in a matter so far above the reach of human inquiry.—Do let them tell us, by what new rule of philosophy we are to admit the discordant testimony of a few rejecting this part of revelation, in preference to the unanimous evidence of all Christendom, asserting its reality.—Do let them tell us, if it be not more probable, that these mysteries have been disclosed to men, with those of the Trinity and Incarnation, equally incomprehensible, than that the whole Christian Church, should have been for ages, involved in the grossest errors, contrary to the positive assurance of God himself. *Behold I build my Church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.* (Matt. xvi. 18.)

Leaving our opponents to reconcile these absurdities, I think I may now address to you those welcome words spoken by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans ; *I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ*



*for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world.* (Rom. i. 8.) Have we then any reason to feel ourselves dishonoured by our faith?—have we any cause to be ashamed of professing ourselves members of the Roman Catholic Church? Verily I should blush to profess myself any thing else.—Yes, I plainly avow, that if I cease to be a Catholic to-day, I must own myself an infidel to-morrow:—there can be no medium for the philosopher or consistent man.—The impious Rousseau himself, saw the justness of this reasoning and acted on it. “Prove to me,” says he, “to-day, that I am obliged in matters of faith, to submit to the decisions of any man whatever, and to-morrow, I will become a Catholic.” And every man acting consistently and uprightly will pursue the same course.

In conclusion then, it must be evident to all that the Church of Rome only is Catholic.—As often therefore, my Protestant Friends, as your lips repeat these venera-

ble words, *I believe the holy Catholic Church*, so often must your consciences convict you of apostacy from the fold of Christ.—Vainly will you endeavour to cover yourselves against reproach, in the swelling multitudes of your associates in error:—they are innumerable, *but their witness doth not agree*; and it is only in calumniating and vilifying the eternal Spouse of Jesus Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, that we have a melancholy instance of your unanimity\*.—In this, you act the part of the reprobate Jews who once gave evidence against the Author of grace, and the Redeemer of the world.—But actuated by the same divine charity, and only desirous of promoting your eternal happiness, she pardons these trespasses, and prays incessantly in your behalf, with Jesus exclaiming, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.* (St. Luke xxiii. 34.)

\* This was a remark of Tertullian. “*The sole principle of unity among heretics,*” says this Father, “*is their hatred of Catholicity.*”

## SERMON XXIII.

ON THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CHURCH.

*Going therefore teach ye all nations,—behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world. (Matt. xx. 19, 20.)*

THE Almighty, in his relations with man, governs himself by principles so sound and just, so sublime and simple, so independent of human circumstances, that it is only the soul herself that can place a bar to his grace. So that as long as she is not wanting in divine *faith, hope, and charity*, as long as her understanding and heart are right with God by love and filial confidence, she is that faithful servant, to whom the Lord at the end of life will address these consoling words, *Well done thou good and faithful servant, because*



*thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.* (Matt. xxv. 21.)

The universal principles of the Deity in his relations with man are love and justice; whilst those he demands in correspondence on the part of his creature, are faith and obedience. The Almighty guides his creatures through the troubled sea of human life,—midst the shoals of passion, and the darkness of ignorance, as the mariner is directed in a tempestuous night by those flaming beacons, which from some distant mountain top, invite him to the port of safety. Heedless of the boisterous winds, or furious billows, the pilot sets the helm by that friendly signal, and with confident security works his vessel towards that point, where his expectations promise him repose.

In religion in the same manner, the Almighty imposes upon our understandings certain fixed and unquestionable principles, which are capable of directing us

with unerring certitude, amidst the scandals of error and vice, to the haven of truth, and the port of eternal happiness. Guided by these principles men would infallibly reach the abodes of heavenly peace, if their native pride and self-sufficiency did not persuade them to mistrust these lights, and prefer the specious dictates of their own reason. Through this the multitude fail; and thus by practically questioning the love and justice of God in his dispensations, they refuse him that faith and obedience, which are the undoubted homage he requires at their hands. I have already adverted to three of these fundamental principles in religion; the UNITY, the SANCTITY, and CATHOLICITY of the Church.—And I now wish to direct your attention to a fourth—her APOSTOLICITY.\* The last may be view-

\* A learned Protestant writer makes the marks of the Church consist in submission to *lawful pastors*, and communion under Jesus Christ in the essentials of *faith, worship, and government*; and says, “that these are the

ed as the Polar Star of the Christian—that compass by which he may safely steer through the darkness of ignorance, and the delusions of contradiction, till through the gate of Death he enter into the brightness of eternity.

My Brethren, it would be imposing on your patience, were I to undertake to prove, that the Church of Christ was originally founded by the apostles.—*You are fellow citizens*, writes the apostle, *with the Saints and domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* (Ephes. xi. 19, 20.) To this fact then your own good sense will not permit you to demur. The only point therefore which at present merits your attention, is

true notes or marks by which the Catholic Church is to be known, is the opinion of our most eminent (Protestant) divines.”—“It is by these marks we must find the Catholic Church, if we would not mistake the society of schismatics and heretics, nay of heathens for her.” (Barwick’s Treatise, p. 3.)



whether there still be a Church which being apostolical in her establishment, retains an apostolical succession of pastors; fulfilling these words of Christ, *behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.* (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

My Brethren, the great design of the Eternal Son of God, in establishing his Church upon earth, was to fulfil those engagements solemnly made to the human race, of one day restoring it to divine favour, by opening to the children of men, the richest treasures of divine mercy, grace, and benediction; for as the apostle tells us, *where sin abounded grace hath much more abounded.* (Rom. v. 20.) But as each succeeding generation would present fresh objects of compassion, till the final dissolution of the world, so he decreed, that this avenue to his bounty, this channel of his graces, should never close while time endured: he therefore made his church indefectible; *the gates of hell*, said he, *shall not prevail against it!* (Matt. xvi. 18.) Now if it be the decree

of heaven that the church shall stand upon her apostolical foundations till the end of time, so it necessarily follows that she must subsist with an apostolical priesthood.—For the shepherd and the fold, the pastor and the flock, are so completely identified, that it is impossible to consider the one without reference to the other. They are the parts of a whole ; as essential to each other as body and soul to man : and as a living body will surely indicate the presence of a human soul, so the apostolicity of the priesthood will be an infallible clue to the apostolicity of the church—and through this medium I hope to establish this day this glorious characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church.

The absolute necessity which the church is under of deriving her priesthood from the apostles, appears in the very nature of those sublime offices and functions which form the peculiar duties of the ministry :—functions undoubtedly of a spiritual and supernatural kind,—or, in other words,

which no ways come within the limits of human capability, unassisted by the gracious succour of God himself. For whether we confine ourselves to the simple administration of baptism, or to the impressing on the soul of man the sacred character of a priest of God,—or whether we advert to those mysteries, which are operated at our altars, or reflect on that extraordinary power exercised on the sinner, in the tribunal of penance,—we must admit, that these actions hold no place in the order of nature—and if they work their effect, it is only by the special aid and concurrence of supernatural power. Hence, those only can exercise the sacerdotal functions, whose priesthood comes from God; and those only have a claim to the confidence of others, who can shew that it does.—But as this can no otherwise be made manifest, than by proving a distinct inheritance, of the mission and functions of the apostles, who were appointed to them by Jesus Christ;—so those only will be able to



shew that they have the divine priesthood and the mission of the apostles who can prove that their priesthood and mission are derived by a direct succession from those messengers of the Holy Ghost.

You are sensible, then, my Brethren, that Jesus Christ did ordain sacred ministers when he established the Christian Church, whose divine office was to instruct mankind in the knowledge of revealed truth, and administer to all their spiritual necessities. These ministers were to be instruments in the hands of the Father, by which he engaged supernaturally to communicate to our souls, those gifts and graces, which the incarnation and passion of his Son had obtained for us. These ministers moreover were to be robed in the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ, and to represent that sacred person mediating between God and his creatures. Like him they were to interpose, and God promised to consider them *till the consummation of the world*, as the consecrated channels of his mercies,

and benedictions. In his condescending bounty and love he entered into a contract with them, by which he bound himself to work a supernatural effect in the soul of every man who through them should apply for it, in the form he prescribed.—And thus in a manner committed to the ministers of his church an authority and power over his own divine graces and gifts. Exteriously they were to appear as other men ; but in their souls were to carry a character before which the angels should bow. “There is no greater dignity under heaven,” says St. Augustin, “than that of a priest of God, consecrated to handle the heavenly sacraments.” And St. Bernard exclaims, “Oh excellent and honourable power of a priest, to which nothing in heaven, nothing in earth can be compared.”

We use this language, my Brethren, not to assume honour to ourselves, but that you may *so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God*; (1 Cor. iv. 12.)—that *you may*

*know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteeming them more abundantly in charity for their works sake, (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) may give glory to God, who as the same apostle writes, has commanded light to shine out of darkness; and in giving us the ministry of reconciliation, has placed this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us. (2 Cor. vi. 7.)* My sole object then on this occasion is to make you sensible, that the soul can need no spiritual help or grace which God has not enabled his ministers to extend to her. Even the privilege of forgiving sins he has not withheld—*Whose sins, he says, you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. (John xx. 23.)* Yet I would not have you consider this matter otherwise than with the eyes of faith, *for we walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor. v. 7.)* First study therefore our high priest Jesus Christ administering before his Father; view the



eternal WORD clothed in the poverty of man; and then contemplate the power and the virtue of the Holy Ghost, secretly co-operating with these ministers, to whom God *has given the ministry of reconciliation.* (2 Cor. v. 18.)

It is truly wonderful to observe the mysterious cloud, which our divine Saviour has spread over the whole of the Christian religion, that he might receive the homage of our entire faith. Here the strongest evidence, and most perfect concealment are combined, so as not to have a parallel in nature. In fact, every thing connected with the incarnation of the Son of God, shines through a mist of obscurity. The very prophecies by which anciently he was distinctly pointed out, were enveloped in clouds of mystery. Even when he revealed himself to the Jews, he remained a *hidden God*. Be not surprised then, my Brethren, if it be under a similar combination of light and darkness that Jesus Christ has placed the ministers of

his church. We have distant proof and testimony sufficient to enable us to discern them by faith,—but want that bold evidence of the senses which some may require. And if I have undertaken to make them known to you this day, even in the shade of their obscurity, it is only by producing proofs which silently speak, that I shall be able to succeed : faith must effect the rest. A principle not more essential to religion in the new law, than it was in the old. Let us examine, for instance, by what signs the Jews distinguished their priests. Was it by any mark which they carried upon their persons? No.—Was it by their official robes? No.—They, like Christians, had their false prophets clothed in priestly garments. Did God publicly and individually manifest them to be his ministers? No! but having, in the power of his might, and in the face of his people, solemnly consecrated and appointed Aaron and his children, he declared, *Aaron and his children shall be priests to me by a*

*perpetual ordinance.* (Exod. xxix. 9.) And it was on the strength of that declaration and appointment, that in beholding a son and descendant of Aaron the faith of the Jew silently spoke, "Behold the minister of God!"—a rule moreover confirmed by Jesus Christ himself, when he told them, *Attend to the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees, because they sit on the chair of Moses.* (Matt. xxiii. 2.) In the same manner, my Brethren, in the new law, Jesus Christ does not individually manifest his ministers, by inscribing their character on their foreheads; but amidst signs and prodigies constitutes APOSTLES, commands them through all ages to announce his gospel, and promises to abide with them. It is therefore in beholding their successors, who sit on their chairs\*, that

\* "Thus therefore it is (says Bishop Beveridge,) that the apostolic office has been handed down from one to another ever since the apostles' days to our time; and so it will be to the end of the world,—Christ himself being continually present at such imposition of hands, thereby transferring the same spirit, which at first he breathed into



faith secretly speaks to the Christian—  
 “Behold the ministers of God !” Indeed  
 no otherwise, my Friends, for the first  
 thirty years of his life, was Jesus Christ  
 pleased to manifest himself to men. The  
 prophecies declared that out of Bethlem  
 he should come of the royal house of Da-  
 vid at the very time that Juda should fall  
 under the dominion of a foreign prince ;  
 which event was accomplished in Herod.  
 But these visible tokens by which he was  
 to be known, though they universally re-  
 presented him as a divine person, sufficed  
 to make holy Simeon and Anna, and all  
 those who believed in him, confess their  
 God in an humble and destitute infant ;  
 and as the scripture says, *speak of him to  
 all who looked for the redemption of Israel.*  
 (Luke ii. 38.)

his apostles, upon others successively after them, as really  
 as if he was present with the apostles themselves, when  
 he first breathed it into them. Insomuch that those who  
 are thus ordained, are said to be made bishops by the  
 Holy Ghost himself, as well as the apostles were. (Acts xx.  
 28.) By which means, the Holy Catholic Church always  
 hath been, and still is truly apostolic, as it is called in the  
 Nicene Creed.” (*Barwick's Treatise*, p. 66.)

If, therefore, proceeding at once to the point, we ask—who is the true minister of the great God, authorized by him, to announce his word, and dispense his sacraments? the answer is—he only, who can shew that he forms a living branch of the apostolical ministry of Jesus Christ, and is presented as such to the faithful by lawful authority.—Now only a minister of the Roman Catholic Church can shew that he forms a part of the apostolical ministry of Christ, and he only is presented to the faithful by lawful authority; therefore only a minister of the Roman Catholic Church, presented to the faithful by lawful authority, is to be acknowledged a true minister of God, empowered by him to announce his word and dispense his sacraments\*.

\* I fear my readers will hardly believe that I have faithfully transcribed the following lines from a modern Protestant writer of great eminence. “The word *heretic* naturally signifies what we mean by the schismatic. For in the first ages, heresy and schism were indiscriminately used to signify any communion opposite to the Catholic commu-

When I say, presented to the faithful by lawful authority, I mean *regularly* and canonically appointed to exercise the office of pastor. For whatever dignity the sacramental character of priesthood may confer on the individual, it can give him no authority or jurisdiction over others, unless with such authority he be regularly invested by those who hold the power of appointing—*How can you preach*, says St. Paul, *unless you be sent?* (Rom. x. 15.) Therefore in assuming, as pastor, a claim to the attention and obedience of others, it will also be necessary to produce some evidence of a divine commission to act as the *minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God*. Now this evidence must be either *ordinary*, that is the common evidence ; or it must be *extraordinary*, that

nion.—Hence appears the absolute necessity of all true churchmen adhering to the fellowship of their Bishops and Clergy, and avoiding the meetings of Protestant sectaries of all denominations — and for the two following reasons : 1. The sectaries *have no ministry*. 2. They are *schismatics*." (Barwick's Treatise, p. 145.)



is miraculous\*. It was by the latter evidence that Moses and Jesus Christ proved before the world their divine mission. It was by similar testimonies that the apostles proved their mission before the nations to whom they preached; and ere they announced to them their doctrine, convinced them that they had an authority to instruct them. The evidence of miracles, my Brethren, when combined with solid virtue, speaks so forcibly to the understanding, that it is regarded as the voice of God, raised above nature herself, and

\* "In the apostles," says Barwick, "there was something *extraordinary*; something *ordinary*. Whatever was *extraordinary*, was designed only for the first propagation of the gospel. and therefore not necessary to the perpetual government of the Church." — "But there are other things which are *ordinary* and *essential* to the apostolic office, without which they could not have been apostles, and which are necessary to the government of Christ's Church till his second coming." Among which, he adds, was "the power of *ordaining*, *i. e.* of transmitting their authority to others." "Whatsoever belonged to them as apostles or officers of Christ," he continues, "was to descend to their successors for ever." (*Treatise*, pp. 32, 33.)

thus silencing all opposition. For if the whirlwinds proclaim his power, and the heavens his wisdom, the formal suspension of the laws of nature by the interposition of a miracle, cannot be a less powerful testimony in favour of truth.

Often then has the Almighty thus interposed to exalt the humility of his servants in the Catholic Church, and in glorifying our ministry by the most stupendous miracles and prodigies, has confounded the scepticisms of infidelity. India can yet recount the works of a Xaverius, whose apostolic labours were illustrated by those signs noticed in the gospel. The blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke, the lame walked, and the dead returned to life. In short, my Brethren, there is not a kingdom or province in the world, where tradition and common report have not perpetuated some miraculous act of our ministry—and though irreligion may scoff, and an incredulous philosophy withhold her assent, nevertheless the evidence is too

concurrent, the proofs too strong, to allow the unprejudiced and prudent to deny, that God has thus often exerted his power to manifest his ministers, and the truth of their doctrine.

But, my Brethren, in addition to this extraordinary evidence of divine commission only necessary upon extraordinary occasions, there must be the ordinary evidence from which no one can be dispensed: and unless God be in opposition to himself, *anathema to an angel*, who would preach without it. For as St. Paul writes: *No man taketh the honour to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was.* (Heb. v. 4.) We consequently require some evidence of such vocation, and as this is not a necessarily extraordinary testimony, for *miracles are not to believers, but to unbelievers*, (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) so it is by the ordinary evidence that it must be ascertained; which Jesus Christ himself has explicitly explained in these words; *Amen, Amen, I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth*



*up another way, the same is a thief and a robber;—but he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. (John x. 1, 2.)*

Independently of the miraculous testimonies exhibited by the apostles; independently of the signs witnessed on the feast of Pentecost, their commission was conveyed to them by Jesus Christ himself in the most simple yet express form of words, so as to leave no doubt on their minds of the authority transmitted to each. Addressing himself to them, Jesus Christ said, *all power is given to me in heaven and on earth. (Matt. xxviii. 18.) As my Father sent me, so I send you; receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John xx. 21, 22, 23.)* Going therefore, *teach ye all nations; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)* In this manner, my Brethren, the apostles receiv-

ed their commission from Jesus Christ, and in a similar manner transmitted it to their successors. *Fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, they sent them away.* (Acts xiii. 3.)

Such, my Brethren, is the interpretation of the apostolicity of the Church, which the Fathers in the ancient Council of Nice represented as one of her four glorious characteristics,—the basis of her Catholicity, the pillar of her sanctity, and the evidence of her unity. It is the great artery that feeds the whole community. As the section of a nerve in the animal system leaves the limb or member paralyzed and morbid, so a break in the chain of apostolicity will cause the immediate failure of those graces, which are the life of a Christian Church: for, as Jesus Christ has said, *the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine.* (John xv. 4.) In reasoning upon the apostolicity of the Church, I follow the track of the holy Fathers, who regarding it as a

property of the true Church, were accustomed to entrench themselves upon it, whilst contending with their heretical opponents. A few passages from their works I will shortly produce in discussing the apostolical title of the Church of Rome, to which we will immediately proceed.

The apostolical foundation of the Church of Rome is, indeed, a fact so universally known and admitted, that it becomes rather a matter of exultation, than of inquiry; and he must be strangely unacquainted, both with profane and ecclesiastical history, who would call in question a truth which seems undisputed by any. On the Rock of Peter the Church of Rome was founded; and whilst empires have passed before her, she still subsists in the majesty of her extension, offering defiance to time. In her we behold an unbroken line of Pontiffs in the regular order of succession, bearing those keys of spiritual power and jurisdiction, which that apostle received from the Redeemer of the world,



and which all the strength of hell has never been able to wrest from them ! On the contrary, as law-suits contribute to settle more unequivocally the legality of worldly titles, so does the opposition of heretics and schismatics consolidate the authority of the Roman Church.

She, my Brethren, is the ladder of Jacob connecting heaven and earth, with Jesus Christ leaning on the top. Under which beautiful figure her innumerable files of apostles and priests are presented to our imaginations moving after each other in regular succession during eighteen centuries, and as they pass the goal of mortality, we observe them carefully delivering up to their successors, those same keys of spiritual jurisdiction which the twelve originally received from Jesus Christ.

Nor is this, my Brethren, a play of thought, we have a load of proof to support it.—We have in the See of Rome the very names and acts of each successive Pope, up to St. Peter, registered on parchment,

with a weight of testimony that must overthrow all doubt. What other church or sect can shew as much? "Let heretics declare the origin of their churches," says the learned Tertullian, "let them trace back the succession of their bishops to the beginning, until the first shall derive his appointment from one of the apostles, or have an apostolical predecessor.\* For it is in this manner, the Roman Church recounts the ordination of Clement by Peter.†

\* Lib. de Præs.

† Nothing can more decidedly indicate a bad cause, than perpetually recurring to some new principle of defence:—a drowning man will seize a straw. If Protestants are satisfied that they have a succession from the Bishops of the Catholic Church, through Parker, Calvin, Luther and the heroes of the 16th century-reform, why do they appeal to a descent from the Albigenses, Valdenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites? Or if they are clear in deriving their origin from these, why do they labour so strenuously to establish their mission from the Catholics? This wavering conduct surely implies a consciousness of weakness, or rather of no evident succession. To be satisfied of this species of prevarication, let Protestants only compare the arguments by which their Episcopal Clergy defend themselves against the *Presbyterians* and *Dissenters*, with those they employ

Let heretics produce something like this," says he.—“It is,” writes St. Augustin, \*

against the *Catholics*: and of this diversity of principle see a striking instance in the learned *Barwick's* treatise already so often quoted, by collating the argument of page 72, with the contents of page 252 and those immediately following.

But as Protestants are so desirous of establishing a relationship with the Albigenses, Waldenses, Bohemians, Wickliffites, Hussites, and others, it is proper they should be put in possession of their real history. It is true, as Barwick owns page 257, that these sectaries were, like Protestants, strongly averse to the Roman Catholic Church;—a feeling common to every heretic from the first era of the Christian religion. For an enlarged account of these sectaries then I must refer my reader to the 11th book of Bossuet's *Variations of the Protestant Church*.—Briefly however, will I state that the ALBIGENSES were a filiation of the ancient *Manicheans*; and were a band of *unnatural* monsters, who abjuring the use of *Marriage*, denying the *Divinity of Christ*, and the *Sacraments of the Church*, perpetrated the most crying abominations against God, as well as ecclesiastical and civil government. After the Catholic Clergy had exerted themselves to reclaim these wretches by instruction, justice raised her sword against them, and the civil power, with the approbation of the ecclesiastical, pursued them till they were totally exterminated. Their punishment is death at this

\* Lib. cont. Fun. c. 4.



“ the succession of priestly ministers, from the apostle St. Peter to the present Pontiff

day, by the existing laws of England.—And it is but a few years since 16 of these unnatural monsters were hanged at Lancaster.—Protestants however who are the watchful enemies of the Catholics, and ever seeking to fix an odium upon our Church, have hence endeavoured to attach to her the stigma of persecution ; and have even signalized their disregard for historical truth by attempting, without any evidence, to discredit recorded facts. “ It is not to be denied,” says Barwick p. 257, “ that they hold many superstitious customs, yet not being fundamental”—— !!!

The WALDENSES, or VAUDOIS, were a more harmless sect of fanatics than the Albigenses, till they imbibed the levelling principles of Calvin, and became Huguenot-Protestants. Originating in Lyons in the twelfth century, they spread into the mountains of Savoy and Piedmont. The unlawfulness of riches was their distinguishing tenet, and as they believed that these rendered every priest criminal, and deprived them of grace to administer the sacraments, they refused to communicate at the hands of the Catholic Clergy. These mountaineer fanatics, may be assimilated to the miners of Cornwall, who live very peaceably in the full enjoyment of Methodism, from which it would be a vain attempt for the more enlightened Christian to draw them.

The BOHEMIANS or Moravians are a sect extremely resembling the latter—holding all property in common. *Equality* is their distinguishing *tenet*.

which binds me to the Church" (of Rome.) Not to tire you with authorities, if I only mention the consenting voice of nations, if I remind you of the appellations of Apostolic See, and Chair of Peter, by which every class of writers have at all times designated the See of Rome, you will subscribe to the expression of the Father just quoted, "in the Roman Church there has always resided the pre-eminence of an Apostolic See. \*"

The WICKLIFITES and the HUSSITES were fanatics partaking of the principles of both the Albigenses and the Waldenses. The former have often made a conspicuous figure in the disturbed times of English history, for instance, under their leaders Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. Their ruling principle consisted in believing that sin deprives a man of all jurisdiction and authority, both spiritual and temporal.

It is to be observed that these forerunners of Protestants consisted of the very dregs of either ignorance or vice, and had not amongst them a single Bishop for perpetuating a ministry. They were all real fanatics, with whom it should be disgraceful to a Church of England-Protestant to own any connection, especially as none in fact ever existed between them.

\* Aug. Ep.

I could also adduce many councils, especially that of Florence, which declares, "The Roman Pontiff to be the successor of St. Peter, and head of the whole Church !" Now, my Brethren, if the holy Fathers who lived in the primitive ages of Christianity viewed the apostolical succession of twelve, twenty, or forty Bishops, as indicative of the true Church, of how much more consequence to us should be the uninterrupted succession of 252 who have filled the Chair of Peter during the space of eighteen centuries ! Truly the finger of God is here. And wonderful indeed is it, that whilst political revolutions have almost universally been accompanied in every state by confusion in their ecclesiastical governments, as we lately witnessed in parts of the continent of Europe, Rome has never suffered any interruption in the succession of her Bishops ; and though the form of her temporal legislature has undergone continual changes, at one time subject to Emperors, at another period ruled



by Gothic Kings, Grecian Viceroy's and Consuls—though fire and sword have laid her waste, still the Chair of Peter has remained indefectible and immoveable. I might also advert to her actual preservation amidst the wreck of nations, and contemplating those convulsions which have lately agitated the globe, together with the irreligious temper of the age, ask the reflecting mind whether it be possible that she could have survived the storm, had not the potent arm of God been stretched out to her protection? *His seed*, says the Psalmist, *shall remain for ever.* (Ps. lxxxviii.)

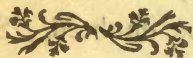
The Roman Catholic Church moreover, though diffused through every country, is universally apostolical, because she was either planted in them at the beginning by the apostles, or has since been extended to them, as scions are laid down from the parent trunk. It would be too laborious a task, for me to trace this succession of Bishops in particular nations: the unbroken chain which Rome presents will suffice

to shew that the Roman Catholic Church possesses an Apostolical Priesthood, and an Apostolical Mission. It is, moreover, notorious, that all those apostolic men who, in different ages since the first preaching of the gospel, have communicated that light to nations, have received their missions from the Bishops of Rome; and not a people has been converted to Christianity since the days of the apostles, but by the labourers of her vineyard: amongst them I could name an Augustin of England, a Patrick of Ireland, a Xaverius of India, and a hundred others.

My Brethren, I now conclude, having earnestly laboured to point out to you the real minister of God, through the apostolicity of the Church. True, I have not miraculously manifested myself like Elias: but I have produced testimony sufficient to convince you that an approved minister of the Catholic Roman Church is the lawful minister of God, authorized to announce his word and dispense his sacraments. In

presenting myself to you, therefore, as an approved Priest of the Catholic Roman Church of Christ, before God and this congregation I bid all remember these my words at the last day, when we shall be again assembled in the presence of our Creator and Judge. My God, in thy name I have declared myself thy minister, and as such have announced thy word ! To thee I now appeal, in the face of angels and of men ! Hear this protest, and may these souls bear witness to it at thy judgment seat ! If thou hast a lawful minister out of thy Catholic Roman Church, then as a false teacher number me with the dead this instant ; let me be a sign of malediction to this people and the world, and may thy *anathema* be upon my soul for eternity \*. (*Gal. i. 8.*)

\* It may be asked, if this passage was ever delivered from a pulpit ? It was—and to a very crowded congregation in the Spanish Chapel. Some Protestants afterwards declared they should never forget it.





## SERMON XXIV.

SHEWING THE WANT OF APOSTOLICITY  
IN THE PROTESTANT SECTS.

*Amen, Amen I say to you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (John x. 1, 2.)*

**H**AVING I trust succeeded in establishing the apostolicity of the Roman Catholic Church by positive evidence, it will also be advantageous to shew how her apostolicity is supported by negative proofs. First then, having been apostolical in her foundation by the admissions of our adversaries, no period, event, nor circumstance can be named, when she ceased to be so,—no era mentioned, when it began to be doubted. She therefore

must still retain, what none can prove she ever lost.

My second negative proof is, that if the Church of Rome be not apostolical, there is no apostolical Church in the world, since this property, independent of her, exists in no other. In the first place it cannot belong to the schismatical Greek Church, through defect of *mission*;—whilst those sects to which the reformation has given birth, cannot even shew the most distant pretension to such a title, having neither *orders* nor *mission*. Bishops as successors of the apostles, and containing the plenitude of priesthood, have alone the power of administering the sacrament of ordination, or of investing others with the sacerdotal character.—By the means of this sacrament, instituted by Jesus Christ, the sacred ministry of his Church has been perpetuated to the present hour; and therefore by the failure of Bishops you would be deprived of that source from which a succession of pastors is to come.

Now, my Brethren, it is a fact that when the Reformists abandoned the Church of Rome, they were not accompanied by one single Bishop, and consequently did not retain within themselves the seed of a ministry, or the means of either forming or perpetuating a Church. Luther, Calvin, and the other leaders had received but the orders of simple priesthood, and therefore could not give to others a dignity which they never possessed. And if they afterwards proclaimed themselves Bishops of the Church, or attempted to advance others to that station, it was not with more right or authority than I have to announce myself Patriarch of Constantinople.\*

\* After denying that the sacraments of the church can be dispensed by unqualified ministers Barwick very properly writes; "The most absurd notion of ordination, is that which derives the power of ordaining from the *people*. In matters merely human, I grant, the people may invest one of themselves with civil power, as is the case in elective kingdoms; but it is very different in things which relate immediately to God; and the reason is, because the business of government depends on the law of nature and nations, but the ordination of pastors is founded on a divine and positive institution. This is a



Prevented both by time and inclination  
at present, from entering on the contro-

power which Christ received from his Father, and gave it to his apostles.—None can claim this power by any law, either of nature or of nations, or in any other manner than as Christ has conveyed it. And since Christ bestowed this power of ordination to none but the apostles, with a command of doing as he had done, it is plain that none can receive this power, but from those that are invested with it themselves. To use the words of a late Presbyterian writer; No individual, no society of men can convey to another a power which they do not themselves possess: but a congregation, a society of laics have not the power, and, according to the doctrine of scripture, cannot warrantably exercise the duties of the ministerial office.—No, this belongs exclusively to those who have been publicly and solemnly set apart and ordained to the work.—How then, can the people invest, with a power, an authority which they do not themselves possess? The idea is absurd. This would be to make the stream rise higher than the fountain from which it springs, (M'Dowel's Presb. Mode of ordaining, Dub. 1812, p. 24.) This is excellent reasoning, but recoils strongly against its author and his associates. For I desire to know (since authority is absolutely necessary to the formation of a minister) whence the present Presbyterian ministers received their authority? If they have it not by a succession from the first apostles, I desire to know from whence they have procured it? Not from the people, for this they disclaim. If they will say, they derived it from those ministers who ordained them, I ask them, whence did they receive their authority?

versies respecting the forged register of Parker's consecration, or the mock ordination of Queen Elizabeth's bishops in a tavern, I shall proceed to my point a shorter way and on surer grounds, by stating, first, that by a parliamentary statute of Queen MARY, the ordinations of the preceding reign were declared *null* and *void*, not only through want of *ministers*, but also on account of a defect of *form*.—It may be said that hatred to Protestants was the motive which urged the legislature to this act. But, my Brethren, we should consider it a sacrilege to reiterate orders had they been actually received, as may be observed in the instance of a schismatical Greek Priest professing himself a Catholic.

The answer must be, by a succession from those presbyters who received this authority from our Saviour. But it has been already proved that the power of ordination was, in the apostles's time, the peculiar privilege of one of the clergy superior to presbyters, whom we now call Bishop,—and that the succession has been continued only in the superior order, and not in that of presbyters, who never received any such authority.”—(*Barwick's Treatise*, p. 65.)

—I will also appeal to the statute of the 8th of Queen Elizabeth, which pretended to dispense with what had been wanting in *minister and form*, and declared them bishops *notwithstanding* : by which, parliament unintentionally admitted and formally registered these defects in the most public manner that was possible.

I may ask then, has parliament been privileged by Jesus Christ with a power to dispense with what he made requisite for the administration of his sacraments ? Is it to that tribunal that our divine Saviour has addressed these words : *Whatever ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven ?* (Matt. xviii. 18.) Probably we may hear one day of its dispensing with the use of water in the administration of baptism,—or with a belief in the Trinity,—or with the sacred scriptures ;—for it is as easy to do one as the other. I deny then that either king or parliament has authority to direct or



guide in these matters ; they must remain as Jesus Christ ordained them. Parliament may have the power of making emperors, kings, and ministers of state, but it is the Church only that can form bishops, priests and ministers of God.

If we turn moreover to the other more highly reformed sects of Methodists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Dissenters, we shall discover that they are equally destitute of ministers, divinely appointed, and succeeding the apostles. Their ministers are not considered clerical, even by the members of our established Church, who deny them all pastoral authority and priestly power, and view them in no other light than as individuals selected by societies of men to read scripture to them, and teach them morality. “ The attempt of our presbyters,” says a great Protestant divine \*, “ in ordaining without and against their bishops, must needs be void and of

\* Thorndike.

no effect, but that of schism. They could not receive the power of the keys from them that had it not to give; and therefore in celebrating the eucharist, they do nothing but profane God's ordinance, therefore the lawful ordaining them is not re-ordaining, but ordination indeed, instead of that which was only called so." Such was the declaration of a very celebrated divine, and we may certainly add our advice, "PHYSICIAN CURE THYSELF."

My Brethren, in no part of the ministry of the Protestant Church, from Luther to Wesley,—and from Wesley to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, can we discover the chain of succession from the apostles, by which both grace and jurisdiction are exclusively to come. It presents a new concern,—a new succession, wholly unconnected with the old; and no impartial man can discover in such a ministry a feature of apostolicity. Even if the validity of their ordinations were admitted, we must contend that they are self-

constituted pastors,—that they came over the hurdles into the sheep-fold,—and were not introduced by the door, as Jesus Christ has prescribed ; and consequently we must refuse to consider them as the shepherds of the flock \*.—Having stated the argument of this discourse, I now commit the subject to my Protestant adversaries, who themselves will convince you that I have not strayed from the path of truth.†.

\* The first mission which the English Protestant bishops received, was that of LETTERS PATENT from Queen Elizabeth;—the second came by an ACT OF PARLIAMENT!!! At the same time therefore that we absolutely deny any spiritual or apostolical *character* in the Protestant clergy, we are nevertheless willing to pay every due respect to their *parliamentary* authority and mission.

† The remainder of this discourse, as well as the extracts enclosed in this note, *with the exception of the few words printed in capitals*, is entirely the language of Protestant divines. It might be imagined, that the sentiments here professed belong to some solitary individual, who having strayed from the true Protestant course, had clothed himself with the mantle of some Catholic author. But no, far from being the sentiments of a solitary individual, they are inculcated by the most distinguished among the Protestant divines, as the doctrine of the established Church. (See notes in vol. I. pp. 313, 351.) A writer



\* "In the present age, a general sentiment seems to prevail, that Christianity

from whom I am about to make a long extract, places before his readers the following works on this subject, in the form of a note. "I allude," he says, "particularly to Archdeacon Daubeney's "Guide to the Church;" to Bishop Skinner's "Primitive Truth and Order vindicated," and, more recently published, Mr. E. Barwick's "Treatise on the Government of the Church." Let not, however, any later work be supposed capable of superseding Archbishop Potter's admirable "Discourse on Church Government:" a book so excellent in all respects, that it can hardly be surpassed. One great merit of Mr. Barwick's book is that of directing the reader's attention to that work, and making most judicious extracts from it. He has also extracted the most important passages from all other English treatises on the Church, in such a way as to revive the memory and point out the utility of each."

To convince my readers, therefore, that the author of "Church Union" is supported in his arguments and language by other Protestant divines, I will quote the esteemed treatise of the Rev. Robert Nares, Archdeacon of Stafford, "On the Influence of Sectaries, and the Stability of the Church." "Had these men (SAYS HE, REFERRING *of course* to LUTHER and CALVIN, THE TWO LEADING REFORMERS,) been contented to be received as mere human teachers, there would have been nothing uncommon or extraordinary in such a difference of opinion. But, as both chose afterwards to assume the style and

\* Davies' Church Union, p. 218.

allows every man to walk after the imagination of his own heart, and to do what is

manner of apostles; as they pretended, and perhaps in their enthusiasm sometimes believed, that their thoughts, words, and many of their most trivial actions, were suggested by the especial influence of the Holy Spirit, how can we reconcile so remarkable a disagreement with those extraordinary pretensions? Is God the author of confusion? Will the *Holy Spirit* teach one doctrine to one man, and the very contrary to another, both especially employed in what they continually delighted to call the work of God? Is this credible? Is it even possible? If not, we have almost in the beginning of their history, this very strong reason for denying the pretensions of one at least of these teachers; and as their claims were so similar, and supported by means so exactly alike, there arises immediately a strong suspicion, that we ought to deny the pretensions of both. Nor was this their only important difference in point of doctrine."

"From this æra the division took place, which has ever since continued, between the Calvinistic and the Arminian PROTESTANTS\*; and this sect, esteemed so formidable, and in some respects appearing so, was, even under the government of its first teachers, a house divided against itself. As the doctrines of these two leaders differed, so did their discipline."——

'Nor is this striking difference in discipline so unimportant, as otherwise it might appear, in two men who equally professed to be divinely commissioned, to restore and extend the true faith of Christ. It is certain, beyond all

\* In the original *Methodists*.

*right in his own eyes.* As a natural consequence of such a mode of thinking, every

reasonable doubt, that the Apostles, who were in truth divinely commissioned and inspired, established one uniform mode of discipline in all the churches which they planted; the same, or nearly the same as that which was reverently preserved in all churches till the Reformation.—These modern apostles on the contrary, differed in their discipline as much as they did in some part of their doctrine; so little appearance was there of the operation of the same spirit within them.”

— “ The declared object of these teachers, AND OF ALL OTHER PROTESTANT MINISTERS, HAS BEEN, to reform, not to divide the Church. When they transgressed the ordinances of the Church, and introduced their own regulations in contradiction to its canons and discipline, their usual plea was that of necessity; and their authority the pretence of a peculiar call from heaven. But if, as may, and often has been proved, the discipline of our Church is derived from the practice and appointment of the apostles, and stands, therefore, on inspired authority, no reasonable person can admit of a commission to disobey and disturb that discipline, under a less evidence than that of miracles. This evidence the new teachers never directly attempted to claim; though indirectly they did, as I shall have occasion afterwards to observe. Our Saviour himself, who had the highest possible commission to found a new Church, disturbed not the ordinances of the old while it subsisted; but submitted to them all, being determined in every thing to fulfil all righteousness. But righteousness can never be fulfilled by intruding into holy



attempt to expose the folly and danger of departing from the straight rule of the gospel

offices, acting in resistance to authority, and promoting divisions and confusion. The modern apostles are, moreover, undeniably convicted of self-contradiction; since if they really were, as they pretended, true sons of the Church,—*they* must have believed, whether others did or not, all that I have now alledged of its divine origin; yet whenever their enthusiasm prompted them to undertake any thing irregular, in pursuit of their great object of making proselytes, which they called *the work of the Lord*, they never were restrained by regard to church discipline, nor even by the direct prohibition of bishops. Yet the bishops were their lawful superiors, whom they were bound, by their professed principles, and still further by their oaths, to reverence and obey."

"This consideration doubtless it was, which induced both \* LUTHER and CALVIN, AND ALL THEIR SUCCESSORS IN THE PROTESTANT MINISTRY, to declare throughout life, that they did not mean to separate themselves from the CATHOLIC Church; and that all the irregularities which their ministry exhibited or occasioned, were the result, not of choice, but of necessity. What then was this necessity? It was, as they alledged, an urgent call from God to preach the Gospel, according to their respective opinions (different, and even contradictory as they were) a call so urgent, that if they found themselves excluded from the churches, they were obliged to preach in the highways and fields, or in any kind of buildings, or wherever they could have an auditory. But this

\* In the orig. *Wesley and Whitfield*.

is censured as *rash* and *illiberal judgment*.  
And, for the purpose of enforcing this cen-

divine call to disobey those superiors, to whom they had sworn respect and obedience, ought to have been made extremely plain, both to themselves and others, before they had presumed to act upon it. To themselves I doubt not that it might seem manifest, during the paroxysms of their enthusiasm, and in the elation of mind which attended their great success. But to others it could not have been sufficiently demonstrated, had the reason of the thing been duly considered, except by means of miracles; and those, as I mentioned before, they did not pretend to perform. If they were excluded from the churches by persons possessing a regular authority, it was their duty to acquiesce and be silent, unless circumstances manifestly paramount to all ordinary rules had imperiously demanded their interference. Here again we are at issue with their followers, who pretend that there *was* that urgency of circumstances, as well as the particular call, both of which we utterly deny."

—"We deny, then, with reason, the necessity which could urge \*LUTHER, CALVIN, AND THEIR FOLLOWERS, to preach THEIR doctrines; and if they were excluded from the churches for preaching them, we cannot in justice pass any censure on those who issued the prohibitions. When they had been so excluded, nothing could justify them, as men regularly ordained, for preaching without authority.—Still less can any thing excuse them, for collecting congregations of their own from the bosom of other men's cures; for forming new ordinances, and a peculiar species of discipline,

\* In the orig. *Wesley* and *Whitfield*.

sure, has often been repeated that question of the apostle—*Who art thou, that judgest*

out of the Church ; and in direct defiance of all those who were their lawful and spiritual governors. Either the Church of God is something holy, or it is not. If, as *we* have been taught to believe, the ecclesiastical authority of Bishops, exclusive of that which the civil power may confer upon them, be in truth derived from the appointment of Christ and his apostles, they who resist it (and clergymen more particularly, as bound by peculiar ties) offend against the ordinance of God. If in the form and constitution of the Church there is nothing sacred, why were these teachers so scrupulous, in some points, not to offend against it ? In fact, they had brought themselves into a very awkward dilemma. Conscience told them that they ought to adhere to and obey the Church, of which SOME OF THEM\* IN THE OUTSET were sworn and regular ministers ; but when that obedience would have reduced them to silence, or to a conformity with the doctrines held by the ordained rulers of the Church, then their ambition and their enthusiasm forbade them to obey, and compelled them to seek new pretences to justify their irregular conduct."

—" One method is suited to the propagation of the gospel, another to its establishment ; and when its order has once been fixed by apostles, and continued by their regular successors, if every bold enthusiast be entitled to disturb that order, under the pretence of a superior call, what can follow but confusion ? LUTHER and CALVIN, Whitfield and Wesley, indeed chose to *consider* the gospel as *not* preached in the CATHOLIC CHURCHES†, because it was

\* In the orig. *they*. † In the orig. *churches of the establishment*.



*another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth."*

not preached according to their ideas; and therefore they regarded themselves as missionaries, sent to propagate the truth "as it is in Jesus," according to their favourite expression. But is not this what every enthusiast may equally pretend or imagine, however absurd or pernicious may be the tenets which they adopt? Of a commission so extraordinary, therefore, nothing less than miracles could be a sufficient proof; and to these the founders of PROTESTANTISM\* did not venture to lay any direct claim; though they were willing enough to obtain a kind of implied credit for them, by relating surprising interpositions of Providence, which, if they could be literally believed, could deserve no other appellation. They must in fact have been either miracles, or the delusions of enthusiastic and superstitious minds; and as the relators did not presume to call them the one, we must of necessity conclude that they were the other."

—"But for the always increasing irregularities of these modern teachers; their departure from the discipline of the Church; their own intrusion into the episcopal functions; and their encouragement of other intruders into the lower offices of the Church, I know not what apology can be offered. The words of Archbishop Potter, on this subject, though written without any inference to particular sectaries, are too important not to be laid before you. "How displeasing it is to God for any man to assume *any* office in the church, without his commission," he shows from the example of Saul, Uzziah, the Kohahites, and Co-

\* In the original *Methodism*.

“ That all rash and uncharitable judgment is expressly forbidden ; and that who-

rah and his confederates, under the first covenant, and then proceeds thus : ”

“ Indeed under the christian œconomy, they who violate the laws of God are seldom punished in a visible and miraculous way ; but then they are reserved to the future judgment of God ; which though it is more distant, and consequently less apt to affect unthinking men, is no less certain, and if duly considered, far more terrible than any punishment in this life. And as the offices of the Christian Church (as he had proved before) are of divine appointment, as well as those of the Jewish ; and as much more sacred and honourable than they, as the substance is preferable to its own types and shadow ; so they who usurp these offices, though their punishment may not be so sudden, will undoubtedly find themselves in a worse condition in the next world, which is the proper season of punishment for offences against the gospel, than those who invaded the rights of the Jewish priesthood.”

“ I have made it I think sufficiently clear, that this irregular preaching and ministry, undertaken by \* LUTHER, CALVIN, AND THEIR SUCCESSORS, could not be of God ; that their proceedings were too disorderly, too contrary to the rulers and discipline of the Church, to be approved under common circumstances ; and that those teachers produced no proofs of a superior commission, which could authorize them to disturb an order of church government derived, as we believe, (and as they believed also) from the appoint-

\* In the original *Wesley* and *Whitfield*.

ever goes beyond what is written, in censuring the conduct of his brethren, and pronounces a sentence of condemnation, by the weight of his private opinion, or a conceit of his own self-sufficiency, is chargeable with a great offence : these are truths which no sincere and well-informed Christian can deny."

"But widely different from this, is that duty which is incumbent upon every faithful minister of the gospel, to open the

ment of Christ himself; and continued in unbroken succession from the days of the apostles to the present hour."

— "These things have in general been very little understood, but a strong and consistent hope now arises, that this ignorance is at length passing away. Very laudable pains have been taken, within our own times to enlighten the minds of men upon this important subject; and truth and reason will gradually spread, in spite of all endeavours to oppose them. It will be then seen and acknowledged, that, if Bishops, and other ministers of the Church, were as bad as calumny has represented them, or even worse, it is not the order which may or can be changed, but the individuals who would require to be reformed: and that they who separate themselves from the unity of the Church, do virtually pronounce sentence of excommunication against themselves, and cease to be members of Christ's body."



book of the sacred records, and truly and impartially to report such cases as have been already adjudged and determined ; and also to warn every professor of Christ's religion, that the authority of this book will be recognized in the supreme court—in that great day *when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.*"

" In this book then, it is plainly laid down and declared, that the Church of Christ upon earth, was established in perfect unity of *fellowship*, of *faith*, and *doctrine*, guarded by a wholesome *law of discipline*, and placed under the care and superintendence of a duly-constituted ministry, which derived its appointment and authority through Christ, from God the Father of all."

" And, to those who acknowledge the New Testament as the rule of their faith—as that code which unfolds the foundation of their hopes, and the terms of their responsibility—I would recommend, as a subject of serious and necessary considera-

tion, the manner in which the apostles of Christ spoke of those who should introduce *divisions* and *heresies* prejudicial to that Unity."

" St. Paul thus pathetically exhorts the Corinthians to avoid the first tendency towards a diversity of judgment in the Church. — *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment : for it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren, that there are contentions among you. — Divisions and contentions !*"—— " How far had they proceeded ? and what effect had they produced ? Had they gone beyond what is deemed, in our age, the lawful exercise of private judgment ?

Let us hear :— *Now this I say, that every one of you saith—I am of Paul ; and I, of Apollos ; and I, of Cephas ; and I, of Christ.* The ministers here mentioned,

*Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, were all duly appointed, sound teachers, equally authorized to instruct the Church. It might, therefore, be thought—and were Christianity a scheme of human device, and subject to the control of variable opinion, it might be thought with truth—that a predilection in favour of either of these ministers must have been the most innocent exertion of private judgment: but how does the apostle argue upon the case? Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Cor. x. 12.) Which is as much as if he had said—It is required of Christians to hear the gospel with simplicity and singleness of heart; not to enrol themselves under the names of their favourite teachers, and to set up the ministry of the one in opposition to that of the other.”*

“For this partiality he censures an evil, and as leading to an evil still greater, the disuniting of the body of Christ. In another place, therefore, he expresses himself on



this subject more fully and emphatically—  
*I hear that there be divisions among you,  
 and I partly believe it ; for there must also  
 be heresies among you, that they which are  
 approved may be made manifest among you.”*  
 (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19.)

“ Surely a partiality, however undue, to the ministry of some one of those apostolical teachers who were *earnestly striving together for the uninterrupted faith of the gospel*, was far from amounting to the crime of *heresy*. But the apostle justly regards the indulgence of this partiality as taking the first step in the road to heresy ; as following the unsteady light of a separate judgment, that *abomination of desolation*, which, through the thorny path of fruitless dispute and uncharitable contention, leads the unsteady mind from the narrow way of salvation into the wilderness of heresy and delusion. This was, then, one of those *offences* or *stumbling-blocks*, of which our Lord had forewarned his disciples, declaring to them,—*It is impossible but that of-*

*fences will come; but wo to him through whom they come.* (Luke xvii. 1.)

Of the pernicious tendency of such predilections we have many examples in the modern history of Christianity. Thus LUTHER and CALVIN\* were ministers of our apostolical Church. By uniting in a common cause with their brethren, they might have been useful to the edification of that Church. But an intemperate, though honest zeal, led them into some irregularities in the work of their ministry. Their exertions made them popular; and popularity produced a *Sect*. Abandoning the unerring rule of the Gospel, for the guidance of private judgment, they disagreed upon certain points of doctrine. Each was followed by his party, and the *Sect* was again *divided*. This wild vine, planted in the soil of self-conceit, has, in the space of TWO CENTURIES, become luxuriant and spreading. How many separate branches it may have put forth, before the pre-

\* In the original *Wesley* and *Whitfield*.

sent day, it would be tedious to inquire. But ALL\* of them exhibit a total alienation from the parent Church; and there are those amongst its cultivators who avow the design of overshadowing its growth and supplanting it altogether. Against those who proceed thus far in the road to heresy, and cause actual separation from the mystical body, the same apostle warns the elders of the Church:—*Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers—hath visibly invested you with the sacred charge—to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know that, after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of yourselves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*” (Acts xx. 30.)

“And, as the disciples of these perverse teachers are drawn away after them, and

\* In the original *some*.



therefore separated from the unity of the Church, so, on the other hand, the discipline of the Church would not admit of fellowship with them. For it is an apostolical injunction—*Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have received, and avoid them.* (Rom. xvi. 17.)

And to the Church of the Thessalonians this charge is given :—*We command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition that ye received of us ; for yourselves know how ye ought to follow us.* And again :—*If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*" (2 Thess. iii. 6, 7, 14.)

" From these last words it appears, that in the days of the apostle insubordination had not proceeded to that height of effrontery as to exult in the number of its votaries. A removal from the fellowship

of the Church was matter of *shame*, even to the disorderly and contumacious.”

“ In the apostolical writings, no subject occurs more frequently than the reproof of those self-constituted teachers, who introduce schism and disorder into the flock of Christ. Thus as the term *apostle* implies one who is duly authorized to carry the mandates and execute the commission of his superior, so St. Paul characterizes those irregular teachers who, without such authority, intruded into the ministry by the name of *false apostles*, or men falsely pretending to a divine commission. Some of these had sought occasion to blame the regular ministers of Christ, alledging particularly against them, that they taught the Gospel for gain, and urging as a specious contrast, the disinterestedness of their own labours. Now, though it was a Christian maxim, that *those who preach the Gospel shall live by the Gospel*; yet, from receiving that support to which the ministry had a lawful title, St. Paul re-

solutely abstains, declaring—*What I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that where-in they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ—taking upon themselves the office of self-constituted teachers.—And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed, as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their deeds.*” (2 Cor. xi. 12, 15.)

“ Here it is to be observed, that these *false teachers* and importers of schism appear externally as real ministers of the Gospel, only they want an authentic appointment; and instead of being lawfully invested with their office, they *only transform themselves into the apostles of Christ*; and, however their voice may sound like preachers of righteousness, whilst they come with this spurious com-



mission, St. Paul hesitates not in styling them *ministers of Satan*. Abating their presumption and self-sufficiency, these men may have had upright intentions ; but they introduce such disorder and division, as must eventually promote the cause of the great adversary."

"Nor were such characters to be confined to the times in which the gospel was first propagated. For the same apostle, speaking of the *latter days* of Christianity, prophetically declares — *The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts—or vain conceits—shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.* (2 Tim. iv.) Can a question remain in our days, whether this was a true prediction or not ; whether it has been fulfilled ; or where such teachers and their disciples are to be found amongst the nominal professors of religion ?"

“ In the same manner the other apostles speak of those who should depart from the purity of the faith, and the unity of the Church of Christ.”

“ Thus St. Peter—*But there were false prophets among the people of Israel, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them.*”  
(2 Pet. ii. 1.)

“ *Amongst professors of Christianity this must surely be deemed a most extraordinary heresy! But it was requisite that the apostolical prediction should be fulfilled: and St. Peter is found to have been a true prophet. Our own times furnish examples of men who name themselves after the name of Christ; yet disallow the gospel account of our Lord's person and character, and deny the atonement which he made for the sins of mankind.*”

“ St. John says of the *anti-christian teachers* who were to characterize the last time—*They went out from us; they sepa-*

rated themselves from the apostolical Church—but *they were not of us* previous to their going out; they were not real and true, but only nominal members of the Church—for *if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*" (1 John ii. 19.)

"And, again, he forbids the Church to countenance any teachers who should corrupt the doctrines of the gospel:—*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houses, neither bid him, "God speed."* (2 John x.)

"Of those *murmurers and complainers*, who should introduce schism and disorder in the latter ages of Christianity, St. Jude thus reminds the members of the church:—*But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time,*



*who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.—These be they who separate themselves; sensual, having not the spirit.”* (Jude 17—19.)

“Of the teachers of these disorderly separatists, the apostle says: *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain—they have, first of all, envied, and then devised evil against their brethren—and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward—multiplied their unhallowed altars, and wandered from place to place, to hear what the Lord will say to them there, whilst they watch an opportunity to overthrow his Church—and have perished in the gain-saying of Corè.*” (v. 11.)

“But how can the example of Corè apply, as the apostle does expressly apply it, to those professed teachers of the gospel who separate themselves from the apostolical Church?”

“In order to answer this question, let us consider the crime of this man, and its punishment. Corè and his company mur-

mured against that ministry which God had authorized by a visible and special appointment; they accused this ministry of priestcraft and corruption, and thus excited a schism in the Church of Israel: — *They gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them—Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation of the Lord are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? Upon this plan of general sanctity and private inspiration, they began to assume to themselves the office of the priesthood, and took up their censers to offer incense \*.*”

“Such was their crime: but though multitudes esteemed them in a peculiar manner as *the people of the Lord*, there was wrath upon them, and they perished from among

\* In this passage the author of course refers to Luther and Calvin, and the first Protestant bishops of this country.

the congregation. — Their act, like the united efforts of our present sectaries, had an external shew of *resisting the undue influence of the established ministry, of promoting the cause of religious freedom,—and advancing the glory of God*; but it was *an act of rebellion against the divine decrees*; it was a direct violation of sacred and constituted order; it was an impious presumption, to espouse the cause of God in opposition to the authority of his declared laws; and, therefore, it was visited with the penalty of disobedience. The decrees of God are not yet cancelled; for the apostle views the conduct of those self-constituted ministers of the Gospel,—those *murmurers and complainers* who should appear in the last time—those that *separate themselves* from the one APOSTOLICAL Church—as exactly parallel with the gain-saying of Corè.—He also declares, that a similar punishment awaits them. This will come to pass, perhaps, in the present world; if not, most assuredly in that which is to



come; for *the scripture cannot be broken.*"

"Such is the manner in which the apostles of Christ speak of those who introduce disorder, and divisions, and heresies prejudicial to the unity and harmony of the Church. In handling this weighty subject, upon the present and upon former occasions, I have, as much as possible, confined myself to the express declaration of those apostles, and to such reflections as necessarily arise from them. For it is not any opinion of my own, or of fallible men like myself, that I strive to enforce. It is the unerring and unequivocal sentence of that Gospel which we all receive as the rule of our faith, and as the law by which we expect to be judged in the great day. And here we need not have recourse to a few texts of doubtful meaning, or difficult interpretation. The declarations of the apostles and evangelists upon this subject are plain, frequent, and consistent. They pervade the whole of their writings.

And coming from the mouth of the Son of God, and from the suggestions of his holy Spirit, they claim a place in our hearts paramount to all predilections of party, all prejudices of education, and all deductions of hypothetical reasoning: for if we build our hopes upon what is revealed from heaven, we must receive it as it is revealed. It is not a part of human wisdom to instruct the Holy Spirit of God. That Spirit has declared, that the separation of professed Christians from the one Apostolical Church is a grievous sin—is an act of perverse disobedience to the laws of the Gospel.”

“ That the divine laws are founded in right reason is a most certain truth, though we are not always competent to judge of their reasonableness. But of the fitness of that law which enjoins the unity of the Apostolical Church, we form an accurate idea, if we only consider the pernicious effects which separation, and a persuasion of its lawfulness, produce upon society in general.”

“In the first place, it gives the conceited, the self-willed, and insubordinate, an opportunity of framing trivial and imaginary objections to the faith, the forms and the discipline of the Church : and thus of breaking asunder the universal bond of charity, under the illusive pretence of *tender conscience*.”

“When this principle, spurious and fantastical as we generally find it, is allowed to operate freely, it unhinges every sacred obligation, and reduces the beautiful fabric of Christianity to a heap of rubbish and confusion. What is essential in religion must no longer be enforced according to the rule of God’s word, and the model of the primitive Church: what is circumstantial and indifferent must not be fixed by lawful authority, adjusted by the rules of good order, and directed by general edification. All must submit to the fancy of the individual ; to the effrontery of self-conceit, under the assumed name of *tender conscience*. And as men, when they make



their separate notions and surmises the rule of judging, must be variously determined in their opinions, it is evident that, under the influence of this vague mode of thinking, neither unity nor uniformity can prevail."

"Again: the bulk of mankind, who seldom think deeply, observing such divisions and dissensions amongst nominal professors of Christianity, are VERY PROPERLY led to imagine that so many sects of the same religion are, in reality, so many distinct religions; and that, as the members of each of these sects are equally tolerated and protected in society, one religion must be as good as another; that they all conduct their votaries to the same place; and consequently, that it is perfectly immaterial to which of them they attach themselves, or how long they deliberate before they have determined in their choice."

"Hence the progress is easy to a secret surmise, that if all religions are equal amongst themselves, an adherence to the

form of either of them cannot be matter of any great moment; that, as the right of private judgment operates so freely, a man may shape his religion agreeably to his own ideas, as well as in conformity with the opinions and practice of any body of men; that if he only take heed to support in the world a decent deportment, and serve God *in his own way*, he shall be perfectly safe, however singular in his system of devotion.—It is, then, evident, that laxity of sentiment which countenances unlimited separation, dissolves all the powers of wholesome discipline. Even personal admonition may be rejected with pride and sullenness, upon a presumption of civil impunity or of religious liberty; for whilst a general opinion of the lawfulness of separation prevails, every man regards his union with \* HIS OWN Church, or with any other body of professors, as matter of choice, and that choice as a thing in itself wholly indifferent.”

\* In the orig. *the national*.

“ Hence, if a member of the Established Church is reproved for any irregularity of conduct, or if he encounter the slightest inconvenience or want of accommodation, he withdraws from the society of his brethren, and joins some separate sect; if he cannot submit to the rules of this order, he goes to another; and if his notions and conduct cannot be duly accommodated in any sect, already formed, there is an obvious expedient, to found a new sect of his own, or to subside in the solitary meditation of a *Quietist*: and all this while he continues to avow, the profession of Christianity, and even retains the hope of salvation through Christ.”

“ Such disorders are produced amongst those who have some remaining sense of moral responsibility, and some regard to their condition in a future state. But these are not the only evils consequent upon an unbridled laxity of principle and discipline. To this laxity we must, in a great measure, ascribe the profane licen-



tiousness of thousands in our land, who live without hope and without God in the world. To this we must ascribe the pernicious vices and horrid crimes by which they are disgraced in this world, and the misery they are doomed to suffer in the world to come. A mistaken candour, a spurious liberality, have set them at liberty from all salutary controul in the period of their youth. Because the opinions and the conduct of men are free, the Church could not effectually claim them as her children, and subject them to a religious education. It was not the choice of their parents to bring them regularly into the assembly of the faithful, and their choice could not be compelled. Irreligion is the patrimony of the family; and the general abuse which has grown out of the lenient spirit of toleration, leaves the children in quiet possession of their inheritance. They have no invariable rule of faith impressed upon their infant minds, no sacred laws which demand obedience,

no discipline which may restrain the conduct of men under religious sanctions. In all these particulars, toleration admits of diversity and dispensation; and custom, which perverts the spirit of toleration, connives at their total dereliction."

"Thus multitudes grow up in ignorance and profanness. Beholding religion only at a distance, and remarking the discord and vanity of its nominal professors, they rashly conclude that religion itself is nothing more than a solemn delusion or weak affectation, and treat it with absolute neglect."

"Thus the tolerant laws of our land, which, if properly understood, go no farther than to renounce persecution—to suspend temporal penalties, without abrogating or altering the decrees of the gospel—are made in the opinion of the multitude, the great rule of faith and practice. That multitude seldom reflects that no man can be admitted into heaven by the operation of human laws; and, in consequence of this

woeful inattention, the Holy Scriptures, which \* ARE USEFUL for salvation, are either overlooked or perverted—those Scriptures which teach us that the Church of Christ is *one undivided body*, and enjoin *that there should be no schism in that body, but that all the members should have the same care for one another.*”

\* In the orig. *alone sufficient.*





## SERMON XXV.

### ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES.

*Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. (Matt. xxii. 21.)*

IN addressing myself to a Christian congregation, it surely cannot be necessary to prove, after all we have discussed, that Jesus Christ established a Church upon earth, conferring on her a spiritual authority or jurisdiction, to which, in quality of members, we are obliged to submit. My Brethren, we have consequently two distinct characters to maintain—that of Citizen and that of Christian. The former involves those services which as individuals we are bound to discharge in society, comprehending in its wide embrace, the functions of

government and the duties of the subject, —while the latter, more elevated in its nature, more important in its consequences, takes in those religious obligations imposed upon us by our Creator, and regards those nobler destinies which await us in a future state. Hence spring two orders in society, the one civil, the other religious, which though blended in the same community, are perfectly distinct, and independent, as to laws, government, and authority. By the wise providence of God a line has been drawn between them, by which they can never come in contact, and every irregular encroachment is immediately repelled by this golden rule of our Faith, *Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.* (Matt. xxii. 21.)

Illustrating these two authorities, a Prelate\* has accurately observed, that they are in their nature separate, like two parallel

\* Dr. Hussey, Bishop of Waterford.

lines, which by the smallest inclination even lose their name. If this maxim be well established, the spiritual authority of the Church, however supreme, can never invade the temporal rights of sovereigns, and on the other hand she must possess a jurisdiction which it would be vain for the arm of the secular power to attempt to wrest from her. But why should it even be desired? As liberty, that favoured object of our affections, and of which we are so jealous, received a security and protection from the laws, so will every legislative act of government, provided it be in conformity with the decrees of God, meet that sanction and support from religion, which cannot fail to facilitate its execution, and strengthen those authorities, which independent of her, have a right to command. "Each of these two authorities," says an act of the Clergy of France\*, "is sovereign, independent, and absolute, in that

\* Act C. G. 1765.



which concerns it. To each belongs that power, which is suited to its institution. Each is bound to render a mutual assistance to the other, by way of concert and correspondence, but not in quality of subordination and dependence."

In the old law, which may be considered a prototype of the new, we observe a similar distinction of authorities under the Jewish THEOCRACY. "*Every one,*" says Josaphat to the judges, "*that shall come to you of your brethren, that dwell in their cities, between kindred and kindred, where-soever there is question concerning the LAW, THE COMMANDMENT, THE CEREMONIAL, THE JUSTIFICATIONS, shew it them, that they may not sin against the Lord, and that wrath may not come upon you and your brethren: and so doing you shall not sin.*"

"*And Amarias the priest, YOUR HIGH PRIEST, shall be chief in the THINGS WHICH REGARD GOD: and Zabadias, the son of Ismahel, who is RULER in the house of Juda, shall be over those MATTERS*

WHICH BELONG TO THE KING'S OFFICE :  
*and you have before you the Levites for  
 masters, take courage, and do diligently,  
 for the Lord will be with you in good  
 things."* (2 Chron. xix. 10, 11.)

My object then shall be, for the instruction and information of Catholics, to trace that line which exactly divides the spiritual power of the Church from the civil authority of the state ; and to specify what we owe to our king, and what we owe to God. And on a subject of such importance I shall endeavour to be as clear and perspicuous as possible.

In every state, whatever be its form of government, there must necessarily exist that supreme authority, which is essential to the preservation of order, and the happiness of society. Whether this reside in the persons of many, or be confided to one, matters not ; but to it we strictly owe every temporal submission, and allegiance which the laws require. It is long since slander, my dear Brethren, has thrown

a shade upon Catholic loyalty ; and for a nice adherence to the dictates of conscience, and a just sense of honour, we have been blackened as perfidious, and held forth to the world, as persons dangerous to society and government. I glory, therefore, my Friends, in the opportunity which this subject presents, of vindicating my character, as a Catholic, and of proving to my countrymen, that we are not less steady to our King, than faithful to our God.

By the very constitution of society a natural connection subsists between the governed and those who govern. It is for the sovereign to command, and for the subject to obey.—But as the authority of the former is purely temporal, so he can claim no jurisdiction over his subjects in religion. An old maxim says, that no one can give, what he has not ;—and with equal truth we may affirm, that no one can be bound to render what another has not a right to claim. It is in conformity with



this principle, that Catholics have invariably acted, and whether we view their conduct, under the Pagan Emperors of Rome, or consider their more modern history, under Protestant governments, we shall find that, while they denied the existence of one atom of spiritual jurisdiction in the secular power, by their Prelates and Pastors they were taught to render to the supreme authority of the state, that homage and unreserved fidelity, which is due to it, by the testimony of the laws, by the testimony of God, and the concurring voice of nations.

If British Catholics, therefore, have not acknowledged a claim new, and first heard of in the 16th century, when they beheld the sanctuary invaded by a secular prince, founding a title to spiritual authority in the Church, on his temporal prerogatives in the state, let it not be said that our hearts and affections either were, or are alienated from the service of our king. What we then did, we did in obedience to

God, and conscience.—It had been the received faith of the whole Christian Church, from its very foundation by the apostles, that she was to be governed by an authority, to which the power of CÆSAR could not extend, and that, in all the affairs of religion, she alone is competent to judge and decide. When called upon, therefore, to renounce this article of faith, and acknowledge the new title of SUPREME HEAD OF THE CHURCH, in a temporal prince, —in the words of the apostles Peter and John, we said: *If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye.* (Acts iv. 19.) We did refuse, and we nobly did. We shewed to the world that we feared God more than men.

However, whilst we thus preserved inviolate our submission to the spiritual authority of the Church, our allegiance and fidelity to our sovereign remained unshaken, which, by the most solemn oaths, we offered to confirm, in the face of heaven and earth. In the person of MA-

JESTY we beheld the representative of God, invested with that authority which is necessary to protect and govern a people. To resist that, would therefore be, as St. Paul says, (Rom. xiii. 2.) *to resist the ordinance of God*, and consequently criminal. Yes, my Brethren, such is the nature of that submission, homage, and fidelity which we owe to the Government which protects us,—so obligatory are the civil services, which our country claims from us, that no authority on earth, either spiritual or temporal, can absolve us from our engagements, or break those ties of duty, which will for ever bind us to our native land.—Ties which, contracted at our birth, became strengthened by age, and which neither exile nor persecution can wrest from the generous heart.

And here, my Brethren, I must beg you to remark, that I am now preaching the doctrine of the Catholic Church, received and taught in every nation, since the establishment of Christianity. For notwithstanding



the violent abuse with which she has been assailed by her adversaries, I deny that any canon of a General Council can be produced, which sanctions resistance to the civil laws,—or that according to her genuine doctrine, the temporal authority of the state can ever be opposed by the due exercise of the spiritual authority of the Church. Not that I mean to assert, that no individual member of that Church has acted in violation of this rule,—like every other, it has been transgressed, but transgressed to the scandal of the Catholic world. We have seen the Chief Pastor himself—gladly would I throw a veil of oblivion over all his faults, but as religion is often more glorified by their avowal, than concealment,—we have seen, I say, the Chief Pastor unmindful of the sanctity of his own character, and that he is the representative of Jesus Christ, who declared *his kingdom to be not of this world*, (John xvii. 36.) acquiescing in secular appeals

and arrogating a right of dethroning sovereigns and absolving subjects from their allegiance \*.

I will not here undertake to shew the causes which thus led to the abuse of the spiritual power, delegated to St. Peter and his successors by Jesus Christ.—If I seek an apology, it shall be in the ferocity of the times, and the ambitious policy of those potentates, who so often favoured this usurpation of authority, in order to convert it to their own temporal advantage

\* This claim has long since been formally renounced and abjured by the Pope.—In a Bull addressed to the Catholic Bishops in Ireland, in 1791, Pope Pius the Sixth says, “ In this controversy a most accurate discrimination should be made between the genuine rights of the apostolical See, and those that are imputed to it by innovators of this age, for the purposes of calumny. *The Sec of Rome never taught that faith is not to be kept with the heterodox:—that an oath to kings separated from the Catholic communion can be violated:—that it is lawful for the Bishop of Rome to invade their temporal rights and dominions. We too consider an attempt or design against the life of kings and princes, even under the pretext of religion, as a horrid and detestable crime.*”

and aggrandizement \*. Though the scandal, no doubt, is great in a character so exalted, yet you must remember that Popes are but individual members of the Church, and no ways privileged against the common passions or failings of human nature, which, as you perceive, will find their way to the sanctuary, as well as to the throne. There is no article of the Catholic faith which teaches that Popes are either immaculate, or infallible †. Sinners like ourselves,

\* After Henry the Second of England, for instance, had induced the Pope to make him an offer of the feudal sovereignty of Ireland, it is not surprising that the Pontiff should wish to see the same principle applied to England, and have his pontifical title acknowledged in the latter kingdom by John, as it had been by his Father in the sister realm.

† The oath hitherto taken by the Catholics of Ireland contain the following clause: "IT IS NOT AN ARTICLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, neither are they required to believe or profess, that the POPE IS INFALLIBLE, or that (Catholics) are bound to obey any order in its own nature immoral; though the Pope or any ecclesiastical power should issue or direct such order; but on the contrary, they hold that it would be sinful for them to pay any respect or obedience thereto."



my Brethren, they have even been deposed by that Church of which they formed the head. It is not to Popes then exclusively, my Brethren, I wish you clearly to understand me, but to the Universal Church, to the body of its Pastors, whether collected or dispersed, that we look for infallibility ; *against them*, Christ has promised that *the gates of hell shall never prevail*. (Matt. xvi. 18.) Among these we are to number the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, supereminent by the extent of his jurisdiction and dignity, as Head and Primate of the whole Church.

But that I may establish, beyond a doubt in your minds, that other papal claims never formed a part of Catholic doctrine,—and as facts often speak more forcibly than any argument, I will produce two instances which the history of our own country presents, and by which it may be clearly perceived that Catholics are not left to the mercy of every wind of doctrine; but steady to those principles, which were

first communicated to the Church, can neither be debauched from their duty, by the authority of a Pope, nor the commands of a king. And first, I will refer you to that period of British history, when a Catholic nation was in arms against its sovereign, for having pusillanimously laid his kingdom at the feet of an ambitious Pope:—when the clergy and nobility of the land, with a Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury at their head, effectually resisted this grasp of power, and procured for themselves and posterity that Magna Charta of their rights and liberties, venerated by their Protestant descendants as the foundation of their present greatness, and the basis of that free and equitable government, which is become the envy and admiration of the world. No, let it not be said that Catholics know not how to assert their rights and liberties,—let it not be said that they are insensible to the value of freedom.—Go, read MAGNA CHARTA, I insist, and know that it was the work of

their hands, and the fruit of their wisdom\*.

The second epoch in British history to which I wish to direct your attention, is, when the spiritual authority of the Chief Pastor, in the Church, was abused to dissolve the bonds of allegiance which held a Catholic people to a persecuting Protestant princess. But as it is unnecessary for me to enter into the particular circumstances of the fact, suffice it to say, it was at a moment when an invasion was threatened by a foreign Catholic prince, with the presumed intention of subverting the Protestant religion, and erecting a Catholic establishment in its stead. How then did Catholics conduct themselves on that occasion? Nobly, I answer, they *rendered to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which were God's.* (Matt. xxii. 21.) While they expressed their firm determination never to abandon

\* See note vol. i. p. 408.



that faith, and religion, which they had received through their ancestors from Jesus Christ,—while they declared their resolution to respect and obey that spiritual authority, with which he has invested the pastors of his Church, to their Queen they pledged an unshaken fidelity, offering to sacrifice, in her defence, their lives and fortunes. The papal rescript they received with that scorn and indignation it deserved,—one solitary individual being only found to approve it:—nay such was their universal deportment, that as we learn from a Protestant historian, “she was highly delighted, and returned thanks to God for this singular proof of the loyalty of her subjects.”

Had the Pontiff himself, however, landed, you will say, upon our shores, as a priest and a Catholic, would you have dared to resist his mandate? The very child that learns his catechism can distinguish for you, my Brethren, between the spiritual and temporal authorities of the Pope;—

the one essential to the character of Chief Pastor, the other merely accidental. I answer, therefore, my duty would have taught me to preach up opposition against him, as an enemy to my sovereign and country: and had I been a Catholic prince I would have carried war to the very gates of his capital. But there, though I beheld him, by the fate of war, despoiled of all princely dignity and confined in a dungeon, still would I revere him as the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and the Universal Head of the Universal Church;—his Master has said, *my kingdom is not of this world*. (John xvii. 36.)

Yet, my Brethren, why should I have recourse to facts. As my object is to teach and unfold the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and to shew you the land-marks of the two authorities spiritual and temporal, in the supposition, even, that Catholic history presented a different picture,—had treason and rebellion disgraced the annals of our community, still it could not be

said, that they grew out of our doctrine. No ! they would be in direct contradiction to every principle which as Catholics we profess. Your faith teaches you, my Brethren, unconditional submission to the laws of the state in which you reside ; provided they require nothing of you in opposition to the laws of God. In which supposition obedience would be unlawful, in every other resistance would be criminal. As to a Protestant government, or a Protestant Sovereign—to them you owe that same fidelity, as if they were Catholic. Religion can never enter into the question of the rights and titles of sovereigns. To obey, God and religion command you. And were a person, in the tribunal of confession to accuse himself of secretly plotting against the authority of the state, whether Protestant or Catholic, even in the article of death, must I deny him absolution—until he has receded from his design, and as far as in his power completely made known to the magistrate the extent of the



conspiracy. We will now proceed to the second part.

Having unequivocally vindicated the rights of sovereigns, and, in quality of Pastor, laboured to strengthen that love and attachment which you owe to your king and country, I shall proceed to shew that the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church is totally independent of the temporal authority of the state; and moreover, that as Christians we must all submit to it. Were I however, my Brethren, resolved to employ that great variety of proof and diversity of matter, which this subject, on its first survey, immediately presents to my imagination, your patience would unavoidably be exhausted, and the sun would set upon my ineffectual endeavours.

In order, therefore, to preserve your minds free from perplexity and confusion, I shall confine myself to a train of reasoning, which may be reduced to this simple, yet conclusive argument. Whatever authority Jesus Christ conferred upon his

Church, at her establishment, she still retains;—but the authority which Jesus Christ conferred upon his Church, at her establishment, was supreme and independent of any civil power;—therefore the actual authority which the Church of Christ retains, is supreme and independent of the civil authority of the state. This I will now endeavour to prove.

The words wherein Jesus Christ conveyed to his apostles a plenitude of spiritual jurisdiction, are so distinct and precise, so perfectly consonant with every idea we at present have of a Christian Church, that I am utterly at a loss to conceive how this point of our doctrine can be called in question by any who peruse the scriptures. From the New Testament we learn that our divine Saviour, shortly before his ascension, having collected his apostles, whom he constituted the governors of his Church, thus addressed them. *As the Father hath sent me I also send you.—Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name*

*of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, (John xx. 21. Matt. xviii. 19.) And when he had said this he breathed on them, and said to them; Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained. (John xx. 22, 23.)*

Can language, my Brethren, express in stronger terms this supremacy of authority with which Jesus Christ here invests the ministers of his Church? Unless the blasphemous assertion be made, that our Saviour means not what he says, or was ignorant of the real sense of his words, you must allow that he transmits to them, that same commission he received from the Father, and that he empowers them to preach, and rule the Church, in his name, independently of any other—nay more, bestows on them the right and privilege of exercising a divine jurisdiction, in absolving from sin. In St. Peter he moreover distinguishes the Head of the Church with



a supereminent authority :—*And I say to thee*, he adds, *thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church—and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.—Feed my lambs—feed my sheep.* (Matt. xvi. 18, 19. John xxi. 16, 17.)

It is in this manner, my Brethren, that Jesus Christ planted his Church upon a Rock, and not upon the authority of Cæsar. *My kingdom*, he said, *is not of this world.* It is a spiritual kingdom, my Friends, in which kings profess obedience with their subjects ; *and he shall rule*, foretels the prophet, *from sea to sea, and from the river to the end of the earth,—and all the kings of the earth shall adore him.* (Ps. lxxi. 8, 11.) Yes I will call upon any one to shew in the monarch an exception to this universal denunciation of Jesus Christ, *if he will not hear the Church, let him be*

*to thee as the heathen and publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.)

Osius, the Bishop of Cordova, who presided at the Council of Nice, thus addressed the Emperor Constantine: "Meddle not with ecclesiastical affairs, neither dictate to us in these concerns, but rather be taught by us. Whilst God has committed to you the Empire,—to us he has entrusted the government of the Church: and since by usurping your authority in the state, we should resist the ordinance of God, so beware lest by grasping that which belongs to the Church, you render yourself guilty of a grievous crime;—for it is written, *Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.* To us, therefore, it has not been given to rule an empire, neither have you the power to perform the mysteries of religion." Such was the doctrine of the primitive Church.

Besides, my Brethren, was not the Church established by the apostles, in defiance of the secular power? Do not kings them-

selves receive from her the grace of baptism? Men may be born emperors, but never Christians.—Subject to the authority of the Church, at the very instant that we enrol ourselves members, never can we renounce that authority until we cease to wear the character of Christians. But, perhaps you will ask, where this supreme authority in the Church resides? My Brethren, it is impossible in one discourse to enter as largely as might be wished into the proofs which are necessary to establish every point. This will be set apart as a subject for an entire sermon. Suffice it, therefore, to say for the present, that as this authority was first conferred upon the collective body of the apostles, so it still continues annexed to their successors the Bishops of the Catholic Church. It is in virtue of this spiritual and universal jurisdiction received from Jesus Christ, that the Catholic Church claims and exercises an authority over every individual within her community. Neither clime, nor sex, nor



state can exempt any from her jurisdiction.—Like the ramifications of an artery, it extends to, and pervades, every part of the body. To her, therefore, belongs the right of deciding religious disputes, and teaching faith—she is that bright star which is to enlighten the Christian world,—she is the fountain from whence all spiritual authority must flow. As waters which issue from a vitiated source carry their impurities through every channel, so if ecclesiastical jurisdiction, instead of being derived through the Catholic Church from Jesus Christ, originate in human authority, it becomes essentially deficient in those essential properties, which are necessary to invest it with a divine character.

Strenuous, then, my Brethren, as I have been in asserting the supremacy and independence of pastoral authority, in the Christian Church, together with the necessity of submitting to it, you must observe, from all that has been said, this authority is purely of a spiritual nature. It

ceases the very instant it deserts its proper limits\*, and cannot even extend to the

\* In the reign of Edward I. Pope Boniface VIII. attempted to interpose his authority in the Scotch war of 1301;—but to the Papal Brief the Parliament assembled at Lincoln returned the following dignified answer.—“To the most holy father in Christ, the lord Boniface, by divine Providence chief bishop of the holy Roman Church, John, Earl of Warren, and one hundred and five other barons, send greeting. It is well known to us and to many others, most holy father, that the kingdom of Scotland never did, nor does, by any right whatever belong in temporals to the Roman church. Nor have the kings of England, on account of the independent pre-eminence of their royal dignity, and a custom at all times inviolably observed, ever pleaded, or been bound to plead, with respect to their right to the kingdom aforesaid, or to their temporal rights, before any ecclesiastical or secular judge whatsoever.”

“Having, therefore, diligently deliberated on the contents of your letter, it is, and by the grace of God shall always be, our common and unanimous resolve, that with respect to the rights of his kingdom of Scotland, or any other his temporal rights, our aforesaid lord the king shall not plead before you or submit to any trial, or inquiry, or send any messengers or procurators to your court: especially as such proceedings would be to the manifest disherison of the rights of the crown of England and the royal dignity, the evident subversion of the sovereignty of the kingdom, and the prejudice of the liberties, customs, and laws, which

temporalities of the Church, which, in as much as they are temporal, are subject to the civil law. Now can any one be so foolish as to maintain that we give to a part what we refuse to the whole; or that we acknowledge a temporal authority in a Pope, when we deny it to the whole Church, of which he is but a part. It is well known how much our doctrine has been misrepresented by many of our opponents, who little consider it.—But for the sake of truth, let them distinguish between the sterling faith of the Church, and the heterodoxical or individual opinions with which it is so commonly, but so improperly confounded.

we have inherited from our fathers; to the observance and defence of which we are bound by our oaths, and which we will continue to hold to the best of our power, and, with the assistance of God, will defend with all our strength. Neither do we, nor will we in any manner permit, as we neither can nor ought to permit our Lord the king to do, or attempt to do, any of the things aforesaid, even were he ever so desirous to do them."—*Collier, Church History*, tom. 1. p. 725.



Were a Catholic in the present assembly, to rise up and assert, that a Pope is the vicegerent of God in temporals as well as spirituals, and is designed by Providence to govern the world, would there be any sense or justice, in immediately charging you, me, and the whole Catholic Church with the same sentiment? Yet it is in this manner, that we are often, and most injuriously judged by our adversaries.

I am confident then, my Brethren, that when our doctrine in this point, as in so many others equally misunderstood, is divested of those extraneous additions which have been tacked to it, either by our enemies, or false friends,—when it is viewed in that simple state in which it is presented to you, in your catechisms and professions of faith, it will be found to meet the approbation of the Protestant as well as of the Catholic. Away then, with every fear about an infallible authority in a Pope, or a power to depose monarchs,—or a professed hatred

to heretics,—or absolution from oaths\* ; no more is required of you than what the Church herself acknowledges; that is, he is the chief Pastor of the whole Christian Church, and has that authority which Jesus Christ committed to St. Peter, when he said ; *thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.—Peter feed my sheep,—feed my lambs.* (Matt. xvi. 18.—John xxi. 16, 17.) In other words, labour to teach, instruct, and guide in the road of salvation my whole flock, which I have entrusted to others, but especially to thee, and to thy successors. My whole Church, continues he, shall consist of *one fold and one shepherd.* (John x. 16.) In quality of shepherd, therefore, it shall be thy post to keep a watchful regard over all my *sheep* and *lambs* spread throughout the world, and to maintain them in the solid unity of one body, by their union with thyself: and whilst the *sheep* are employed

\* Catholics, upon oath, have solemnly abjured every one of these principles, as UNCHRISTIAN and IMPIOUS.

in nursing and rearing their *lambs*, thy attentive eye shall pervade the *fold*, and see that all is well. So that should the prowling wolf appear in any quarter, thou mayst be ready to give the alarm, and preserve them from destruction. For the discharge of this duty, *as my Father sent me, so I send you*; but remember, from me you have no other power.

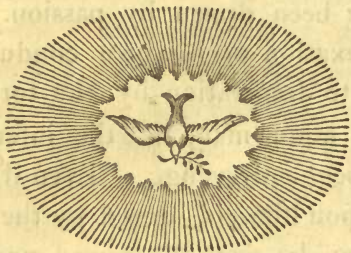
The authority of the Pope, my Brethren, is principally confined to calling together the Pastors of the Church in council, enforcing canonical discipline, instructing the faithful, and dispensing, when necessary, with the ordinances and precepts of the Church; or in other words, in providing for the exigences of the whole flock: but can never sanction, or extend to any thing injurious either to God or man. He cannot make, change or annul, one single article of our faith,—he cannot alter one iota of the morality of the Gospel,—in fine, he is but the executive instrument of Providence. To renounce, then, such a juris-



diction because it is accidentally centered in a foreigner, would be equally absurd, as it would have been for a Greek or a Roman to have rejected the authority of the Apostles, because they were natives of Judea.

In concluding this discourse, it is my duty, my Brethren, to exhort you to a constant and unshaken loyalty towards your august Sovereign; render him the tribute of love and respect, and let your fidelity be the homage of a Christian religious heart, and not of servile fear. Honour him and obey him as your prince; be ready to defend him with your lives, and commend his temporal and eternal interests to the common Saviour of kings and subjects. *Render to Cæsar the things which ARE Cæsar's.* On the other hand, steady to that faith, which has been handed down to you from the Apostles,—firmly resolved to adhere to the cause of truth, for which you have sacrificed so much,—continue to learn your religion from those, who have been commissioned by Jesus

Christ to teach it.—Submit to them, as your guides in revelation, and let no temptation, no false argument deceive you, for it is written, *he that despises you, despises me ;—and whatever ye shall bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven.* (Luke x. 16.—Matt. xviii. 18.) These are the things of God ; and as it was stated in the words of my text, *render to God the things which are God's ;* thus you shall receive an eternal reward.



## SERMON XXVI.

OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE SUPREMACY  
OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR.

*And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon  
this rock I will build my Church. (Matt.  
xvi. 18.)*

THERE exists in the human breast a fund of pride, that will seldom allow us to retrace our steps with humility, and faithfully acknowledge those errors into which we have been drawn by passion. Stung with vexation at his own conduct, and goaded to desperation by the tortures of a guilty mind, man, like the infernal spirits, is bent on revenge. Even if revenge recoil upon himself, urged by the impulse of malice, he sears the wound made in his own conscience, coolly ratifies the act of his hasty passion, and enters into a solemn league with himself and posterity, never to



cancel the deed. Such is the fatal conduct often pursued by individuals, and as nations are but individuals in the mass, such is the course adopted by the British nation after its revolt from the authority of the Catholic Church.

Three centuries have nearly run their course since that Church has been made the object of national hatred in this country, and by the arts of designing men, held up to the vengeance of the people as a defiled adulteress. Traduced by those who had previously turned their backs upon every virtue, she was sacrificed to the lusts of a Henry,—the rapaciousness of a Seymour,—and the politics of an Elizabeth, whilst the strong hand of power has never ceased to direct against her the violent passions of the multitude, and persuade them that she was only deserving of their bitterest execrations. These arts, my Friends, have not been played off unsuccessfully, as they seldom can be, and you are aware that it would be difficult to express the weight of

national odium under which she has continued to a very late period in this island. Indeed, when the tide of popular fury has once set in against any particular object, there seems to be a general surrender of all the reflective faculties of the soul, and impelled only by their worst passions, men are hurried into a temper of mind from which it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reclaim them. In adverting to the history of the world, it will furnish numerous proofs to verify this assertion, and it will be seen that truth, justice, and innocence, have had little connection with the objects of popular antipathies.

The fact is, whilst love is the most fickle and inconstant faculty of the soul, hatred is the most powerful and lasting ; and when once excited, the most difficult to suppress. It seems to force into its service all the other energies of our nature, and to reign over the whole man with sovereign control. If then it be true, that excessive love is often changed into bitterest

hatred, it will explain why that Church and Religion, which for so many centuries were the glory and the consolation of every Briton, and still the pride of the great civilized nations of Europe, should have become the object of their excessive aversion. So that every affection which pride of ancestry, ancient institutions and virtue should have cherished, have been sacrificed to the unrelenting passion of revenge. Every advantage has been taken of the common imperfections of man, and these have been wickedly played off before the multitude, to make even piety and religion herself vile, odious, and contemptible in their eyes. For more than two centuries we were, like the divine Jesus himself, *the reproach of men, and the outcasts of the people*. Not a law existed but for our extermination—and the graves of our fathers were our only inheritance.

At length, however, the days of brighter justice have dawned, and as the clouds of passion have dispersed, men discerning the



falsehood of their original prepossessions, begin to view the Church of their ancestors under shades different from those in which their youthful prejudices had figured it to them. They now confess that she never deserved the appellation of an adulteress glorying in the abominations of her idolatries and superstitions: they have seen her successively triumphant over all these charges of her designing enemies. As, my Brethren, the Papal jurisdiction is therefore almost the only part of the EVER-LASTING FABRIC which now calls for discussion, and to which Protestants are pertinaciously opposed,—and as no part of the Catholic system is viewed by our adversaries with equal jealousy, it shall be my endeavour in this discourse, to bring the subject into its full focus of light, by distinctly establishing the SUPREMACY OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR. Then I trust prejudice will yield to evidence, error to truth, and that your faith, and the religious faith of this people, will be transferred from the

fluctuating sands of private opinion to the eternal foundations of the revealed word. *Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.* (Matt xxiv. 35.)

In the first place I wish all to discard from their minds those prejudices founded in the abuses which have at any time occurred in the exercise of the Papal power. Nothing indeed is more common than to make the abuse of a thing an argument against the thing itself: yet no mode of reasoning lies more open to fallacy. This is undoubtedly a species of argument calculated to produce a great effect on the simple and illiterate classes of men; but that it should have any weight with the reflective and philosophical part of mankind, is truly extraordinary. For if we survey polished society, if we study the institutions and discoveries which are the pride of this and former ages of science, where shall we discover that improvement which is not exposed to this sophistical objection? The true maxim of sound philo-

sophy is, to consider things in themselves, their ends, and their consequences. Now when these are favourable to the happiness of men, and the maintenance of order, piety, and religion, it is to oppose but a weak argument to affirm, that abuses may, and consequently will ensue. All things indeed seem to carry with them a counterpoise of possible mischief, equal to the good they are intended to effect. We observe this in every institution of government;—we remark it in the properties of medicine;—in the exercise of mental talent, and in the application of mechanical force. We even notice it in the dispensations of providence, and in the very work of our redemption. *He is sent*, says the prophet, *for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel.* (Luke ii. 34.) In the like manner, my Friends, the sacraments are either a blessing or a curse—either life or *judgment* to the soul—according as they are approached. Nay, whilst an apostle of truth is the most precious of God's gifts



to men, so, as the minister of error he becomes their *anathema*, (Gal. i. 8.) destructive and ruinous. Hence, my Brethren, be not surprised, if the divine *keys* entrusted to St. Peter and his successors have at intervals proved instruments of scandal and disedification to the flock. Let us act on all occasions in the body spiritual, as we act in the body physical. As the apostle directs, let us not separate the members, *let there be no schism in the body*—but let *the members be mutually careful one of another*; and if one member suffer any thing, let *all the members suffer with it*; if one member glory, let *all the members rejoice with it*. (1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.)

My Brethren, it is a principle in Christian morals, that whatever is essential to their perfection—and consequently essentially necessary, does absolutely exist; and this self-evident deduction is founded on the infinite perfection of God, reigning in all his attributes. Having shewn,

therefore, in a preceding discourse, that a principle of union is essential to the perfection, and necessary to the existence of a revealed religious system, I contend that it necessarily exists in the Christian Church, and may be discovered in the SUPREMACY OF ST. PETER'S CHAIR \*. I shall therefore undertake to prove, that from the days of Christ to the present hour, the Chair of Peter has been exalted above all the other prelatic chairs of the Church, and that the Bishops of Rome have had an acknowledged jurisdiction, as supreme as her See, and as universal as the Church. In the first place I will shew that this supremacy is supported by the sacred evidence of the scriptures : secondly, that it is asserted by the ancient fathers, as well as by the universal discipline of the primitive Church : and thirdly, that it is recog-

\* Supremacy, in some shape or form, is as much the essence of moral government, as gravitation is of the physical world. Where they are wanting, dissolution either moral or physical, immediately ensues.

nized by the testimony of many celebrated Protestants.\*

The evidence of the Scripture I have already often laid before you: *And I say to thee thou art Peter*, said Jesus, *and upon*

\* Protestants complain that the proofs employed by Catholics to support St. Peter's supremacy are weak:—Protestants on the other hand should recollect that their own, against it, are much weaker, being merely negative. Catholics having no new propositions to establish, do not require very strong proofs to support what already stands. Protestants should moreover observe that Catholics are in actual possession—and that it rests with their adversaries to shew not only a lawful, but a better title. Men often securely hold their property, without *any* proof of right but that of possession;—and it would be madness for another in these circumstances to invade it, without a clear and indubitable title. In explaining scripture, studying the Fathers or any other writers, it is always necessary to keep the context in sight;—and to remember that every sentence and expression should be taken in that sense only, in which it may be explained consistently with the others. For that alone is the natural and true sense. When Protestants reproach the Catholics, therefore, with the weakness of their evidences from the scriptures and the fathers, let them recollect, that when conjointly considered with others, they become strong and evident: it is only when the brick is in its place, that it is a real part of the fabric.



*this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven* \*. (Matt. xvi. 18, 19.)

\* The learned Hooke in his *Princip. Religionis* has collected from the New Testament the following six principal evidences of the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, independently of the unanimous testimony of all the holy Fathers.

1°. There cannot be a stronger argument for the primacy of any one than the circumstance of his being constantly named first, and sometimes singly, whilst no mention is made of the rest. Thus, vide, Mark i. 36. Luke ix. 32. Acts ii. 14.

2°. He was the first who on all occasions was the chief actor. Now Christ washed the feet of Peter first. After the death of Christ,—Peter opened the council for chusing a successor to Judas the traitor. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, in the presence of the other apostles, he, first addressed the people, and built the Church. He was first, and exclusively instructed in a heavenly vision, how the Gentiles were to be treated: and without naming many other facts, he first delivered his sentiments in the Council of Jerusalem, and framed the decree.

3°. He was the first among the apostles, who in a special manner was distinguished as the foundation of the

I shall not condescend to make a comment on this passage, my Brethren, but

Church, and was figuratively styled by Christ *the rock of the Church*.

4°. He was the first among the apostles, to whom Christ in a special manner commended his sheep, of which the Church was to be formed.

5°. He was preferred by Christ to others, and endowed with special prerogatives, for whom Christ specially prayed, that his faith should not fail; and who on account of this firmness of faith, was specially enjoined to confirm his Brethren.

6°. He was the first among the other apostles whom St. Paul considered more than the rest. See Gal. i. 18, 19.

¶ To these six reasons an other may certainly be added, viz. He was undoubtedly preferred, to whom the keys of Christ's kingdom were specially delivered. Matt. xvi. 19. The delivery of keys is such a formal transfer of power and authority,—so expressive and so intelligible, that morally speaking it has but one meaning, that of giving in charge, or investing with *supreme authority*. And though we pretend not to deny that the *keys* were virtually delivered to all the apostles, to whom were addressed these words, *Going therefore teach YE, &c*, yet Peter alone had the honour of being individually addressed. When one, is singled out of many, surely the preference implies something!

In these sentiments the holy Fathers unanimously accord. Independently of those quoted in the body of this discourse, I have collected the evidences of the following passages from their works.

leave it as it is, to be received by the simple or rejected by the proud. This supremacy, lodged by Jesus Christ in his apostle St.

St. Chrysostom in his fifth homily on penance, writes, "After (Peter's) grievous fault in denying Christ,—he was again raised to the highest honour. The government of the Church throughout the whole world was committed to him."

St. Hilarius, on Matt. vii. writes, "Peter was the first to believe, and became the head of the apostleship."

St. Ambrose, on Luke xxiv. says, "he was placed over all, because he was of all the only one that professed (the divinity of Christ.)" And on 2 Cor. xii. he writes, "it was not Andrew that received the Primacy, but Peter."

St. Jerome, in his book against Jovinian, says, "Among the twelve one was selected, in order that being appointed head, there might be no cause of schism."

St. Austin, in his 124th treatise on John, writes, "Peter the apostle figuratively represented the Church, on account of the primacy of his apostleship."

St. Optatus, Bishop of Milevium, lib. 2. cont. Parm. writes, "You cannot pretend to be ignorant, that in the city of Rome the episcopal chair of Peter was first placed, in which sat Peter the chief of all the apostles, who was also called Cephas: in which individual chair, unity was to be maintained by all, lest each of the other apostles should claim his own particular chair: so that he is now a schismatic, and an offender, who erects another against this particular chair."



Peter, became attached to that chair which was made the visible seat of his authority;—which chair he was at liberty to fix in any part of the world\*. We do not find from history that Jerusalem was ever occupied by this Pontifical Chair:—but ANTIOCH, where Christianity shot such strong and early shoots, became for a time the honoured city, and the sacred throne of St. Peter's Chair. † As the circle of re-

\* As Bishop of Rome the Pope is therefore *Head of the Church* only *de facto*; but as the successor of St. Peter, he is the Head of the Church *jure divino*.

† Eusebius in his Chronicle, writes—"After Peter had founded the Church of Antioch, he went to Rome, where as Bishop of that city he laboured in preaching the Gospel, during 25 years. *Cum primum Antiochenam fundasset Ecclesiam, Romam proficiscitur, ubi evangelium predicans, 25 annis ejusdem urbis episcopus perseverat.*"—"Nothing," says the learned Alban Butler, "can be more incontestable in history, than that the city of Rome was honoured by the presence, preaching, and martyrdom of the prince of the apostles,—and that he was the founder and first Bishop of that See. Hence Rome is styled by the more venerable ancient councils, THE SEE OF PETER. In this the concurring testimony of all ancient Christian writers, down from St. Ignatius the disciple of this apostle, is

ligion however extended, and soon enclosed the capital of the Roman empire, Peter trans-

unanimous.—Eusebius tells us, that one motive which brought him to Rome, was to defeat the impostures of Simon Magus, who had repaired thither from the East, whence St. Peter had expelled him. “Against that bane of mankind (Simon),” says this parent of church history, “the most merciful and kind Providence conducts to Rome Peter, the most courageous, and the greatest among the apostles, and him who for his prowess was the chief and the prince of all the rest.”

Mr. Whiston, in *the Memoirs of his own Life*, p. 599; writes as follows: “Mr. Bowyer, with some weak Protestants before him, almost pretends to deny that St. Peter ever was at Rome; concerning which matter take my own former words out of my three tracts, p. 53. Mr. Baratier, proves most thoroughly, as Bishop Pearson has done before him, that St. Peter was at Rome. This is so clear in Christian antiquity, that it is a shame for a Protestant to confess, that any Protestant ever denied it. This partial procedure demonstrates that Mr. Bowyer has by no means got clear of the prejudices of some Protestants, as an impartial writer of history, which he strongly pretends to be, ought to do, and he has in this case greatly hurt the Protestant cause, instead of helping it.”

N.B. Mr. Baratier, a Protestant divine, printed at Utrecht, in the year 1740, his *Chronological Inquiry* about the most ancient Bishops of Rome from Peter to Victor, in which he demonstrates that St. Peter was at

ferred the chair of his episcopal government to that mistress of nations, in order, that as she was the focus of civil power, so she might be the head and fountain of religion. As "roads were carried from the Roman forum, the center of that immense empire, to its utmost extremities, and thus all the tribes and nations that composed it were linked together,"\* so by the establishment of the Pontifical Chair of St. Peter in the imperial city of Rome, Rome became the metropolitan city of the Church and center of union, whilst the jurisdiction of the ROMAN SEE, radiated to its farthest limits. And such was the unshaken basis of that ROCK, which supported the throne of Peter, that even when the glory of the Cæsars perished with the Capitol, the papal authority survived amidst the wreck of nations, and *Peter's keys* yet open and

Rome, as Bishop Pearson had done before by a learned discourse in his posthumous works. (*See Butler's note in the Life of St. Peter.*)

\* Eustace's Classical Tour, vol i. p. 196.



shut the gates of heaven to the Christian world.

In support of my second proposition, that the supremacy of St. Peter's chair is asserted by the ancient Fathers, as well as by the universal discipline of the primitive Church, I shall here quote from a work \* a chronological compendium of evidence and facts, which for conciseness and perspicuity, cannot be well surpassed. "The first distinction," says this writer, "amongst Christians, is of those who believe, and those who disbelieve, the Supremacy, in jurisdiction and rank, of the Pope. Leaving at present, out of consideration, the point of his right to this supremacy, the following deduction seems to shew that, in point of fact, he has been in the actual possession and exercise of it, from the dawn of Christianity to the present time. It is observable, that Mr. Gibbon † remarks, that "till the great division of the Church, in consequence of the Greek schism, the Roman bishops had

\* Nightingale's Port. of the Cath.

† Decline and Fall, vol. vi. p. 490.

ever been considered by the Orientalists, as the first of the five patriarchs."

"In the year 1500, with the exception of the schismatics of the Greek Church, the sects in the East, a few Waldenses in Lucerne, a few Hussites in Bohemia, and a few obscure Paulicians, the whole Christian world, *at the beginning of the 16th century*, acknowledged the Supremacy of the Pope. Luther himself in 1518, prostrated himself at the feet of his Holiness, resigned himself to him, for his absolution or condemnation, and professed to receive his decision, as he should use the word of Jesus Christ himself\*. In 1519, he declares, that it never had been his design, either to attack the Pope or the Church of Rome; that the Church of Rome was superior over all; that except Jesus Christ himself, there was nothing in heaven or earth that could be preferred to her †." ‡

\* T. i. p. 58.

† Id. p. 144.

‡ Luther also says in one of his works, § "I do not deny but that the Bishop of Rome, IS, HAS BEEN, and OUGHT

§ In Respon. 13. Propos.

“ Let us next ascend to the year 1439. From this time, advancing upwards to the commencement of the Christian era, the first event of importance on which we alight, is *the Council of Florence*. It was there defined, that full power was delegated to the Bishop of Rome, in the person of St. Peter, to feed, regulate, and govern the Universal Church, as expressed in the General Councils and the holy Canons.” \*

“ Let us next ascend to the year 860. The object of the Council of Florence,

TO BE the first of all; I believe, he is above all other bishops; it is not lawful to deny his Supremacy:” *Melancthon* says no less than that “ the Bishop of Rome is above all the Church; that it is his office to govern, to judge in controversies, to watch over the priests, to keep all nations in conformity and unity of doctrine†:” *Somaius* adds, “ the Pope of Rome has unquestionably been the first metropolitan in Italy; and not in Italy only, nor in the West only, but in the whole world; the other metropolitans have been chief in their respective districts, but the Pope of Rome has been metropolitan and primate, not only of some particular dioceses, but of all ‡.

\* Sess. 10.

† In Epis. ad Card. Belag. Epis. Pariens.

‡ In Tract. Euchar. ad P. Sermondum.



was to re-unite the Greek and Latin churches: this leads to *the schism* which separated them. All persons conversant in ecclesiastical history know, that the schism had its origin in the deposition of St. Ignatius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the election of Photius in his place. Now, as soon as Photius was elected, he himself sent his four metropolitans to Rome, to inform the Pope of the deposition of St. Ignatius, and of his own election, and to solicit the Pope's confirmation of his election. But if the Pope had not an acknowledged supremacy of jurisdiction, in the general opinion of the Eastern empire, this deputation to Rome could have answered no purpose, and would never have been thought of."

"The Pope's answer to it was expressed in the genuine style of admitted and undisputed authority. He addressed a letter to all the faithful of the East; and, particularly addressing himself to the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jeru-

saalem, "You," says his Holiness, "in virtue of my apostolic authority, I order to think as I do, of the cause between Ignatius and Photius, and enjoin you to have these letters read through your respective dioceses, that their contents may be made known to all." Thus, then, at the commencement of the schism, the supremacy of the Pope was as much acknowledged by the Greek, as it was by the Latin Church."

"From the year 750, if we continue our advances, the next period which engages our attention, is the *Translation of the Empire of the West to the Latins*, the important event which connects modern and ancient Rome.—Turning from the part which the Popes took in the temporal causes and effects of that momentous event, their spiritual power was there most fully and unequivocally recognized. The political revolution which it occasioned, had necessarily a considerable degree of influence on the spiritual concerns of the

Church, and gave rise to much conscientious doubt. In that state of general scruple and uncertainty, the universal resort was to Rome. The French did not apply to the primate at Lyons, or to the Bishop of the metropolis, the Germans to Vienna, the Hungarians to Strigonium, or the Bohemians to Prague. They all applied for instruction to the Bishop of Rome, and followed his instructions."

"From the year 500, advancing higher, we come to the time, *when the faith was first preached to the barbarians*. The preacher was generally sent by the See of Rome. If it happened, that the faith was not originally planted in a country by a particular mission, but was diffused there by the accidents of war, or commerce, or by any other circumstance, it always followed, that as soon as the numbers of the faithful became considerable, and the church acquired a consistency, the See of Rome invested proper persons with powers to confirm her in her faith, to estab-



lish her hierarchy, and settle her discipline."

"We are struck at the grandeur of Pagan Rome, when we read of her high-ways, which issuing from the forum towards Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. Far beyond those, the Successor of St. Peter sent from Christian Rome the ministers of his divine commission, to announce the faith to the nations of the earth \*."

"Let us next ascend to the years between 451, 401, 381.—Pursuing the inquiry, we come to the *four first General Councils*. At that of Chalcedon, the fourth of them, held in 451, the fathers addressed St. Leo the Great, 'as the Archbishop of all the Churches, as the head, as the person to whom the care of Christ's vineyard was committed.' They sent the proceedings of the council to him

\* The lines of St. Prosper are well known.

Sedes Roma Petri, quæ pastoralis honoris

Facta caput mundo, quid quid, non possidet armis,  
Religio tenet.

for his confirmation\*.——At the Council of Ephesus, the third General Council, held in 401, the fathers assembled, condemned Nestorius, and sent to the Pope an account of their proceedings. They tell him, ‘that they were forced to that melancholy step by the canons, and the letters of their holy Father Celestine, the Bishop of Rome.’ On receiving Pope Celestine’s letter, they exclaimed,—‘The sentence is just, the Synod returns thanks to Celestine, the guardian of the faith.’ One of the legates, in his address to the Council, says, ‘That in every age it had been known that St. Peter, to whom Celestine was in succession, was the Prince and Chief of the Apostles, the pillar of faith, and the foundation of the Church.’ Before the opening of the second General Council (which was held at Constantinople in 381) the Emperor Theodosius, and the principal ecclesiastics of the Eastern Church, sent an embassy to Rome, to Pope Damasus, with

\* Εἰς βεβαιωσιν.

orders to take his directions on what should be done, and to follow them. In their condemnation of Macedonius, they used the Pope's expressions. A notion prevailing, that the Council exceeded the limits of its authority, the Pope examined their proceedings, and in some instances confirmed, in others annulled them. That the Council might be attended by the Prelates of the Eastern Church, the Pope summoned the fathers assembled at Constantinople to Rome. In their answer, they call themselves his members ; ' they wish for the wings of a dove, to fly to him, and repose in his bosom ; ' but they represent to him, that so long an absence might be dangerous to their churches. In his reply, he compliments them ' on the respect they shew to the Holy See ; and informs them, that Timotheus, a disciple of Apolinaris, whom they had petitioned his Holiness to depose from his see, had been deposed.' Now except on account of his superior jurisdiction they never could have made



this application to his Holiness. At the first of the General Councils (held at Nice in 325) St. Sylvester presided by his legates."

"Ascending to the years between 300 and 100,—this brings us to the third century. Public events, in some measure, forsaking us in this place, we must refer to the writings of individuals, and of these a very small number can be mentioned. In the third century, St. Cyprian \* complains of certain schismatic bishops of Africa, 'who sailed towards the Chair of St. Peter, the principal Church, from whom the unity of the Church arises.' He calls the Church of Rome 'the mother and root of the Catholic Church †.' He says, 'there is but one God, one Christ, one Church, and one Chair, founded on St. Peter, by the word of God. No one can raise any altar or priesthood, besides that which is established; he that soweth elsewhere, does but

\* Ep. 3. p. 14. Ed. Bas.

† Ep. 3. p. 135. Ed. Bas.

scatter and throw away.' In the second century, we have the celebrated declaration of St. Irenæus : '*to this Church\**, on account of its superior headship, every other must have recourse.' In the first century, a division arose in the church of Corinth. Some of the Apostles were then living. To those, notwithstanding the exalted rank and high influence which their apostolic character gave them, the deposed priests did not appeal. Their appeal was made to St. Clement, the second Pope in succession to St. Peter, and he confirmed their deposition. The letter addressed by him on this occasion to the Corinthians, is still extant. The modesty and humility with which he expresses himself in it are edifying ; but he insists on the Supremacy of the Roman See. 'The Chief Priest,' he says, 'has his privileges ; the priests have their place ; the deacons theirs ; the laity have their duties.' In the language of the two first ages of Christianity, the word priest

\* *Propter potiore principalitatem.*

was applied generally to bishops and priests : St. Clement, therefore, points at the Chief Priest as above them all."

" Thus, from a regular chain of historical facts, beginning with the earliest moments of the reformation, and ascending upwards, through the council of Florence, the Greek schism, the translation of the modern empire to the Latins, the conversion of the barbarians, the four first general councils, and the primitive ages, (the six great epochs of the history of Christianity,) to the time of Christ himself, we find the supremacy of the Bishops of Rome, both in rank and jurisdiction, an admitted article of Christian belief. In the year 32—we now hear the Son of God himself say: "*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and,*



*whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19.)

I shall now lay before you the evidencē of some of our most celebrated adversaries \*, and conduct you up such a regular climax of weight and authority, as will both astonish the Catholic, and confound the Protestant, and thus finally place this question in that proud station of superiority, which belongs to one so completely triumphant. In the first place I will appeal to HENRY the Eighth himself, before his

\* The learned Protestant author of the TREATISE writes, p. 100, " Every body (political as well as natural) duly organized, has a *head*. On this head all the members must depend, to it they must *adhere*, with it they must be *united*, otherwise they cannot continue living members :"—and in p. 135, " the office of archbishop, in particular, is expedient to a national church, because if bishops of a province meet in council, some one of them must take the chair, and lead the business, to prevent confusion, as in other assemblies."—Now as the christian church is not a *national church*, do not both these sentences uphold the Catholic principle? In quoting Barwick, I trust these discourses will prove a full refutation of that Author's TREATISE ON THE CHURCH.

libidinous and avaricious passions had blinded his understanding. In his defence of the sacraments against the German reformer, he says, "Luther cannot deny, that all the faithful Christian Churches at this day acknowledge and reverence the Holy See of Rome, as their mother and primate," — "but if this acknowledgment be neither grounded on divine nor human right, how has it so universally prevailed? How was it admitted by all *Christendom*? When did it commence—how did it become so great? Yea, and we shall also find, that the *Greek* Church, though the empire had passed from the western part, continued to acknowledge the primacy of the same *Roman* Church, until she became schismatical—whereas *Luther* impudently affirms, that the Pope has his primacy neither by divine nor human right, but only by force and tyranny. I wonder how this madman could hope to find his readers sufficiently simple or stupid to believe, that the Bishop

of *Rome*, a priest,—unarmed,—alone,—without temporal force,—or either divine or human right, (as he supposes), should be able to establish an authority over so many bishops, his equals, dispersed through such a variety of great nations, so distant from him, and so little apprehensive of his temporal power:—or that so many cities, kingdoms, commonwealths, provinces and nations would be so indifferent to their own liberty, as to subject themselves to a foreign priest (as they have done for so many ages,) or allow him an authority over themselves, had he no right whatever to it.”\*

The next royal authority I will quote, shall be King JAMES the First. In a public speech to his parliament, in the year 1603, he says, “I acknowledge the Church of Rome to be our mother Church.” And in his premonition to all christian monarchs, says, “Patriarchs, I know, were in the time of the primitive Church, and I

\* Hen. VIII. Def. Sacram. cont. Lut.



likewise reverence that institution for order sake: and for myself (if that were now the question) I would with all my heart give my consent that the Bishop of Rome should have the first seat: I being a western king, would go with the patriarch of the west. And as to his temporal principality over the signiory of Rome, neither do I object to that. Then let him, in God's name, be the first bishop among bishops, and the prince of bishops, provided it be no otherwise than as Peter was prince of the apostles." And in another passage concerning the oath of allegiance, he says: "The lower house of parliament, at the framing of this oath, made it contain, that the Pope had no power to excommunicate me, which I caused them to reform; only making it to conclude, that no excommunication of the Pope can warrant my subjects to practice against my person or state; denying the deposition of kings to be in the Pope's lawful power; as indeed I take all such temporal violence to be far

beyond the limits of such a spiritual power as excommunication."

The witness I will next produce shall be Thorndyke. "I have shewn," says he, "that the Church of Rome has, and ought to have, when it shall please to hear reason, a regular pre-eminence over the rest of Christendom, in these western parts; and he that is able to judge and willing to consider, will find that pre-eminence, the only reasonable means to preserve so great a body in unity. And therefore I count not myself tied to justify Henry the Eighth in disclaiming all such pre-eminence, when it was enough for him to disown it, as not extending to his case \*."——In another work† he also writes; "seeing it has been granted by the Church of England that there is, and ever was salvation to be had in the Church of Rome, as a true one, I am very confident that no church can separate from the Church of Rome, without its members making themselves

\* Just Weights, c. 7.

† On Forbearance, p. 19.

schismatics before God." And in p. 33 he adds: "It is out of love for the reformation (whose members having separated from the Church of Rome, must, according to the above principle be schismatics) that I insist on such a principle as may serve to reunite us with the Church of Rome; being well assured that we can never be well united with ourselves otherwise; and that not only the Reformation but our common Christianity will be lost in the divisions, which will never have an end otherwise."

I will next appeal to the learned and much admired Grotius, who writes thus: \*  
 "Grotius, is clearly of opinion, as are many others, that Protestants never will be united with each other, until they are so with those, who adhere to the See of Rome; without which no common agreement or government can be expected; he wishes therefore, that the rupture now existing, as well as the occasions of it, were remov-

\* Reply to Riv. p. 57.



ed ; amongst the causes of which, the supremacy of the Pope, according to the canons, cannot be reckoned, as Melancthon confesses, who even deems the supremacy necessary for the preservation of unity. Neither is this putting the Church at the Pope's feet, but it is only the ancient and respectable order of things restored again." \*

I shall terminate this series with a declaration from the pen of the illustrious Leibnitz. "As God," he writes, "is the God of order—and as the Church, one, catholic, and apostolic, under an individual govern-

\* Grotius in his comments on the New Testament universally ascribes supremacy to St. Peter. On these words (Matt. x. 2.) *Primus Simon qui dicitur Petrus*, he writes, "Princeps haud dubiè collegii a Christo designatus ad retinendam corporis compagem." There can be no doubt but Christ made Peter the head of the apostolic college to hold the whole body together in union. "Nec offendat quemquam," he continues, quod Gal. xi. 9. *Cephas medius inter Jacobum et Joannem legitur*. In manuscripto enim antiquissimo qui ex Græcia in Angliam devenit, abest ibi id nomen, ut et in aliis manuscriptis nonnullis: Græci posteriores apposuere."

ment with a hierarchy embracing all the members, is from God ;—it follows that in this body, there is by divine right, one supreme spiritual magistrate, acting within his own limits—having a directorial authority and the power of executing what is necessary to discharge his duty, for the advantage of the Church.—Even should Rome, which is the metropolis of the christian world, be chosen the seat and residence of this power, from merely human considerations,—really it is requisite in every commonwealth, and consequently in the Christian Church, that there be one supreme magistracy, whether it be determined to center all its authority in one individual, or divide it between many. And even in the latter case, it is fit that one of the members should have the authority of Director, or supreme magistrate, which is the same, though with a limited power\*.” —In a letter to a friend, he expresses his

\* Tom. 5. p. 259. Ep. 53. ad Fabricium.

wish is to restore things at Rome as they were in the time of Nicholas the First and Gregory the Seventh, which he adds, "would indeed bring back to us the golden age." †

I have now, my Friends, conducted you up this regular climax of evidence, and you have seen the supremacy of St. Peter's Chair proved by every species of testimony. We have travelled together over every part of this everlasting fabric, and in the joy of your hearts, I trust, you recognize, that Church *against which the gates of hell shall never prevail*.—She is the tree that was produced from the *mustard seed*—the house of the God of Jacob, as exclaims the prophet Isaiah, *the mountain of the house of the Lord,—prepared on the top of the mountains—and exalted above the hills,—into which all nations flow*.—She is the *holy way, wherein even fools shall not err,—the high-way for the remnant of the people, in which the Lord as a mighty man*—

† Id. p. 65. Ep. 2. ad Grim.



*will lead the blind—and will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.* She is the visible Church of Christ, with whom the Lord has made his covenant—saying, *my spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* (Isaiah.) And like the ark of Noah, may she conduct all her children to salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## SERMON XXVII.

ON THE EVIDENCE FOR THE NECESSITY  
OF A RULE OF FAITH IN THE AUTHO-  
RITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*And if he will not hear the Church, let  
him be to thee as the heathen and the  
publican. (Matt. xviii. 17.)*

IF to learn what Jesus Christ has taught be the chief business of every Christian, to know the means by which he may succeed, is an object of equal importance. It is certainly not without considerable edification, that we remark the pains and assiduity which many bestow upon this *one thing necessary*: but while the hours they give to the study of their Bible, and the time they devote to attendance on a public instructor prove their concern for

religion, it is with the deepest regret that we have often to observe how extremely opposite the result of these inquiries is to truth. What consequence then, my Brethren, is to be drawn from this fact? A fact with which you are acquainted, and no man denies. The clear inference this observation carries with it, is, either that the means employed are inadequate in themselves, or improperly applied. If we look around, and pass distinctly in review every class of Christians, we shall perceive that they all endeavour to draw instruction from the same sources, the scripture and the pulpit.—We shall behold the Dissenter, the Protestant, and the Catholic, each separately producing his Bible as authority for his doctrine, and appealing to the learning and virtues of his pastor for the truth of his faith. How comes it then, my Brethren, that whilst every sect, nay the individual members of every sect, daily discover some new form of doctrine, each one exclaiming, I have found the



*hidden treasure, the lost pearl*,—how comes it, I repeat, that whilst this charming variety rewards the labours of so many, uniformity should exclusively distinguish the efforts of the Catholic, who, whether he reads his scripture in the language of Japan, or hears it explained from a British pulpit, professes the same faith, and learns the same doctrine? How comes it, I ask, that whilst no two clergymen of the reformed Church are ever uniformly found of one mind in preaching scripture to their flocks, an existing difference on any dogmatical point, or article of faith, between two Catholic bishops, however unconnected their nation, manners, and interests, would be a phenomenon and paradox in the theological world?—My Brethren, I speak it before many of those illustrious exiles\*, who have taken refuge amongst us, I speak it in the face of individuals, whom commerce has drawn to this metropolis from every

\* French Clergymen.

kingdom of Europe, nay from every country of the universe, and here challenge them to bear testimony against me.—To what cause then can this uniformity of sentiment be ascribed, which offers such an unequivocal demonstration of truth? are the minds of Catholics differently constituted from those of other men, or are they privileged with any supernatural endowments? No, my Brethren!—Make known to us then, you will say, that divine rule, by which we also may be brought to the knowledge of revealed truth, and preserved from the vacillations of error.—No doubt, my Brethren, from the tone of confidence with which I express myself to you, on this occasion, you expect something from me singularly learned, and your only apprehension, is, lest you should be unequal to understand, or apply the means I am about to recommend. But, my Brethren, if you will but carry in your recollection that you are to learn a religion, which we have received from him, who

preached to the simple, to the unlettered, and to the ignorant, you will not be surprised if we never pretend to teach any other description of faith. You cannot be so deluded as to look for the wisdom of this world from the minister of Jesus Christ, who exclaimed, *I confess to thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* (Matt. xi. 25.)

The secret then, if any, that I am to impart, is, that whilst you peruse your Bible, or listen to the instructions of a preacher, you make the authority of the Catholic Church the rule-paramount of your assent; believing that no interpretation can be just, no doctrine true, which does not square with her's. This universal and reciprocal rule, guiding the pastor as well as the flock, is that by which I wish to be tried, and the one by which I am determined to prove every other. Nay, this rule is so necessary, that without it I



defy you to ascertain one article of revelation;—without it, in vain should I call upon you to certify that the gospel itself is an inspired volume. My Friends, I know it no otherwise myself, and no other means are left me of convincing you. “I would not believe the gospel,” says the great St. Austin \*, “if I had not the authority of the Catholic Church.” Remember therefore, that mere scripture, or mere preaching will never conduct you, with any certitude, to the knowledge of revealed truth—as the confusion and contradiction which reign among our adversaries sufficiently manifest.

Having therefore explained to you those striking marks or signs by which the Catholic Church may be at all times distinguished, and having already made you acquainted with the spiritual nature of her authority, I now wish to shew, both by negative as well as positive proof, that it is the only rule we

\* Contra Episc. Fond. c. 5.

have, and that to it we are expressly referred by Jesus Christ. *If he will not hear the Church*, says he, *let him be to thee as the heathen or the publican.* (Matt. xviii. 18.) Indeed the subject before us may be reduced to this simple statement; as it is necessary in the concerns of a revealed religion, that we should have an authority to direct us, where has the Author of revelation fixed it? My Friends, there are three distinct opinions. The one places it in the strength of our own private understandings, to which every question is referred.—The second arguing more consistently, from the circumstance of revelation being above reason, admits that human understanding is incompetent to speak on truths, which she cannot fathom, and therefore fixes this authority in the inscribed letter of the law or the inspired scriptures. The third class, and these are Catholics, venerate and respect the sacred scriptures, as the written word of God, but contend that like all written laws, they

require a living authority, to explain and interpret them. \*

\* The pen of the illustrious Fenelon has traced amidst his others works a letter upon the article of the scriptures, worthy the perusal of every Christian. "It cannot be denied," he says, "that the Church, who used such caution in unfolding by little and little the secret of the mysteries of faith, as well as of the forms of the sacraments, also shewed the same reserve in unveiling the scriptures, only relaxing her restrictions according to the circumstances of the neophytes, and of such young persons as were weak in faith. The Jews had set the example of this necessary precaution, by not permitting their youth to read the beginning of Genesis, certain parts of Ezechiel, and the Book of Canticles, till they had reached an age of maturity. We also observe St. Jerom pursuing a regular plan in first allowing certain books to the young and tender Læta, and afterwards others, reserving the Book of Canticles for the last, because her mind might suffer by the *carnal expressions* under which the mystery of the sacred nuptials of the soul and the Spouse was concealed, if they were unfolded to her before she had made some progress in the simplicity of faith and the interior virtues. Thus in one manner the scriptures were given to all the faithful, whilst in another they were only distributed in proportion to their wants and acquirements."

"It would indeed be a dangerous error, and resembling that of Protestants, to believe that Christians cannot be solidly instructed in all truth, unless they read the sacred scriptures. St. Irenæus entertained a very opposite sentiment, when he said: "*Supposing that even the apostles*



My Brethren, though civil laws be purposely made to guide and instruct, yet

*had not left us any scriptures, should we not be bound to follow the rule of that tradition which they deposited with those to whom they committed the churches? Many uncivilized nations, that have received the faith of Christ, have accepted this rule, and diligently preserve the doctrines of salvation and ancient tradition, written in their hearts by the Holy Ghost without ink or paper—believing through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in one God, Creator of heaven and earth and all things in them. These men, who have embraced this faith without the elements of literature, may be barbarians in respect to our language, but in regard to doctrine, to practice, and to morals, by the means of faith they are most learned and pleasing to God, living up to all justice, chastity, and wisdom. And if any one speaking their language were to mention to them any of the conceptions of heretics, they would instantly stop their ears and fly to a distance, unwilling to hear such blasphemous discourse. Thus supported by this ancient tradition of the apostles, they refuse to allow even a thought of these errors to enter their minds.”* (Adversus Hær. lib. 3. c. 4.) We perceive by the words of this great doctor of the Church, and nearly cotemporary with the apostles, that there was at that time, among nations of barbarians, an innumerable body of faithful, who were very spiritual, very perfect, and rich, as St. Paul says, *in every word and doctrine*, though they had never read the holy scriptures. This truth no way detracts from the value of the sacred deposit of the holy scriptures, and ought not to diminish the ardour of Christians to nourish themselves with their doctrine,

every one concerned in a legal transaction, must be acquainted with the uncertainty

with a holy dependence on the Church: but the fact referred to is placed beyond a doubt by this clear and decisive evidence. Tradition enabled these innumerable members of the Church to form their faith and morals in the most perfect and sublime manner. The Church, who has given us the scriptures, gave them, without any scriptures, by her living voice, the same instructions that we draw from the sacred text. The *unwritten* word, which is in the mouth of the Spouse of the Son of God, supplied for the want of the *written* word, and imparted to them the same interior nourishment.—In this state of things, the faithful were so *enlightened*, that at the first unbecoming expression they would have stopped their ears; so grounded were they in simplicity of faith, and in docility towards the Church! Such was that discernment, and delicacy with which this happy simplicity armed them against the most subtil seduction of innovators! According to St. Irenæus, men are much mistaken, if they believe that the Church cannot conduct her children to the highest point of perfection, both as to faith and virtue, unless she makes them read the sacred scriptures. What St. Irenæus mentions of the faithful of his time, St. Augustin repeats of the solitaries of his own period. “*A man,*” he says, “*who is supported by faith, hope, and charity, has no need of the scriptures, except to instruct others. Thus many holy anchorets who practised these three virtues, lived in deserts, without possessing the sacred volumes.*” (De Doc. Chris. l. 2. c. 36.) —“When the scriptures were read by the faithful,

of law. Now whence does uncertainty arise? Not from any doubt of the exist-

“ many things prevented the generality of them from abusing this permission.”

1°. “The pastors without ceasing explained the sacred text, in order to inculcate the sense of tradition, as well as to prevent any individual from ever venturing to interpret the text unconnectedly, or to separate it from the plain and simple interpretation which the Church has fixed to it. 2°. The early practice was, to consult the pastors on the most trifling difficulties respecting the sense of any obscure passage in the text. 3°. As soon as any one was suspected of novelty in the interpretation of any text, the bishops, who so frequently assembled, removed the difficulty. Infine, they consulted, especially in the West, the Apostolical See (of Rome) to prevent any dissension. Thus simplicity of faith, docility of mind, the authority of the pastors, and the instructions which they continually gave to the people on the sacred text, at that time prevented the more particular abuses to be apprehended; still however it sometimes happened that persons wrested the texts to a new sense, and occasioned very dangerous contentions. St. Peter assures us, that, in the Epistles of St. Paul, many passages are obscure and difficult, and that unstable minds *wrest them to their own destruction.*”

“ It appears that the \* Waldenses and the Albigenses obliged the Church to exercise her rigorous right of not allowing the perusal of the sacred text, except to those whom

\* See the note upon these sects, p. 260.



ence of the law, which lies before them, but from the different interpretations which

she considered sufficiently prepared to read it with benefit. I do not mean to say, that this restriction only originated with these heretics; it would be necessary to examine very minutely, in order to determine, when this discipline began. I observe however that at that period, the Church perceived by sad experience that even our daily bread could not be abandoned to infants; that they require the pastors to break it to them; and that the very bread which nourishes humble and docile souls, is poisonous to disobedient and presumptuous minds. The Waldenses, or the poor of Lyons, pretended to understand the scriptures better than their pastors, and wished to set them right: the Albigenses persuaded the people to examine the sacred text of their own accord and without reference to the explanation of their pastors, whom they accused of ignorance and deceit."—"Indocility and the spirit of revolt which has shewn itself among the laity, has proved, how dangerous it was to allow the people to read the sacred text, when the pastors no longer retained their primitive authority and primitive vigilance to interpret scripture, and when the people were in the habit of despising their simplicity: it was even found by experience that the fanaticism of these lay persons proved contagious, and that they easily seduced the multitude by their promises of shewing them, through the scriptures, that their pastors were ignorant, deceiving, and unworthy of their ministry. Wickliff, Luther, Calvin, and all the sects of the sixteenth century that led the people after them, applied

persons may give to it. How therefore is a decision to be obtained? Can the law

these words *search the scriptures* to an abuse; and they have contrived to place the Church under the necessity of not allowing the people to read the scriptures but with the express permission of their pastors."

"The inference to be drawn from all this is, that the Church in attempting some little change in exterior discipline, has in nothing altered her real principles. She has never renounced either of these two maxims: 1<sup>o</sup> To give the sacred text to such of her children as she should find prepared to read it with advantage: 2<sup>o</sup> Never to throw pearls to swine, and never to give the text to persons who would only read it to their detriment. Formerly when the generality of the faithful were simple, docile, and attached to the instructions of their pastors, they were intrusted with the sacred text, because they were observed to be solidly instructed, and prepared to read it with advantage. In these latter times, when they are found to be presumptuous, fond of criticising, untractable, and seeking in the scriptures something to stumble against, in order to run into irreligion,—or turning the scriptures against the pastors, that they may throw off the yoke of the Church, it has been found necessary to forbid their perusal, so salutary in itself, but so dangerous by the use which the laity have made of the permission."—"My idea is, that we must never separate these two maxims of the Church; one is, to give the scripture to none but to such as are prepared to read it with benefit; the other, to labour without ceasing in pre-

itself determine? The law cannot speak, nor explain itself; we are therefore compelled to refer to another authority, which our country has wisely lodged in the twelve Judges of the land; whose judgment is the voice of the law, and becomes the rule to direct us.

paring them for it. If you rest satisfied with believing that all the faithful are prepared, without employing the effectual means to render them so,—you encourage curiosity, presumption, rash criticism, and you give them for nourishment the very *writing*: which practice too often occurs amongst us at present. If on the other hand, you always suppose they are not sufficiently prepared for this lecture without ever seriously endeavouring to make them, you deprive their souls of that comfort and benefit which the first Christians derived from these sacred books. The conclusion is, that we must labour without relaxation in preparing the faithful for this lecture; that we must consider only those truly instructed, and solidly established in Jesus Christ, who are in a condition to digest this bread of the strong; and that, according to the advice of experienced directors, the different books of scripture are to be allowed them, in proportion as they become capable of learning them, observing to them on the others, *you cannot bear them now, but you will afterwards.*" (John xvi. 12.) These extracts form but a small part of this admirable letter, the whole of which is deserving of being read.



My Brethren, this comparison of human and divine law, cannot fail to throw light upon the present subject of discussion. You must admit, for facts themselves declare it, that the sacred scriptures may be variously interpreted. Even these few words,—*this is my body*,—*this is my blood*, the plainest that can be brought together, are taken in opposite senses by Christians. How then shall we discover their real meaning? Can they explain themselves? No! Can any one passage be an explanation for another?—No.—We must first decide that we understand that passage, otherwise it would only prove the link of a *circulus vitiosus*. As scripture therefore cannot determine, we must have another authority that can, otherwise the whole system of our religion would be defective, and we might apply to Jesus Christ the words addressed to the rash builder, *This man began to build, and was not able to finish*. (Luke xiv. 30.) Where then is this authority to be found? I answer—where Jesus Christ

has placed it;—in the pastors of the flock, and in the congregation of the spiritual governors or Bishops of the Church. Addressing himself to the first Bishops of his Church, *who hears you*, says Jesus Christ, *hears me : who despises you despises me : (Luke x. 16.)—and whatsoever you bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven :* and referring to the obstinate Christian, he adds, *and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen or a publican.* (Matt. xviii. 18, 17.)

These, my Friends, are the unqualified evidences of the Gospel, which establish the Catholic principle even by the Protestant rule of scripture, whilst we defy our adversaries to produce a single passage from any part of the Bible which authorizes us to explain scripture otherwise than as it has been interpreted by the Church.—Indeed the holy Spirit expressly declares by the mouth of St. Peter, that

*no prophecy, that is, no text of scripture, is made by private interpretation.* (2 Peter i. 20.) My object then shall now be to discuss at large these three systems, and in doing this, to render myself as intelligible as possible, to the humblest capacity.

My Brethren, you will admit, that in choosing a rule or guide in a difficult and intricate business, our only object should be certainty and safety ; therefore that rule or guide will be the best, which is the most safe, and the most certain. Now I object to the two first of the rules in question, because neither of them is certain, neither of them safe, and I approve of the third expressly because it is both safe and certain. In fine, to be still more explicit, the latter rule is a mean adequate to the end ; whilst the others are not. By the first, human reason is constituted that only guide which is to direct man's faith and moral conduct. But your own experience must have convinced you of the unsteadiness, inconstancy, and defectiveness of that facul-



ty, which so often condemns, what it had before approved. This occurs every day to each and all of us, even in expressing our opinions on the most ordinary events.

Indeed if learning itself be no security against change of sentiment—how can we expect stability in a matter so sublime and profound as religion divinely revealed? My Brethren, revealed truths, like mathematical demonstrations, are of that nature, that in discerning them we must either completely succeed or completely fail—for there can be no medium. Judge then if human reason be capable of penetrating into heaven, and of explaining mysteries hidden from the knowledge of man! Judge if she be qualified to speak decisively on these subjects, when, in meditating on them, she is forced to exclaim, Oh who can search the impenetrable secrets of God! No, this would be for reason to overshoot herself;—this would be for reason to act against reason. I am aware, there are many who entertain great

notions of the powers of their understandings, and boast of the superior genius of man. These persons remind me of others, who glory in their personal strength and size. Thou hast length of limb ! well then, tell me the depth of the sea—measure the height of the stars, and give me the span of the universe. Thou hast strength of body!—then move the earth with thy toe : *for the Lord, says the Psalmist, has made it his footstool, and the clouds his chariot, and he walketh on the wings of the winds.* (Ps. ciii. 3.)

But you boast of your reason ! Can reason however, satisfactorily explain the actions of the little spider, or industrious bee ? Can reason tell how the grain of corn is multiplied ? Can reason inform us how we came by reason ? Reason is to the soul, what the eye is to the body ; reason lets in, but is not the light of truth ; and as there are operations in nature, which the material eye can neither distinguish, nor explain, yet the soul knows and believes them, so the infinity of

God involves truths, which the genius of man, in its farthest and highest flights, can never embrace. Of these, nevertheless, the Supreme Being may make to us some communication,—and to that extent which his wisdom, and his providence shall judge fit; which is what we mean by REVELATION. To these then, reason assents, not because she perfectly comprehends them, but because she believes they have been revealed to her, by the Author of truth himself; which again is what is implied by DIVINE FAITH.—Now, my Friends, having thus built our faith on the authority of God, were we afterwards to set reason to work, and curiously employ the WHY, the WHEREFORE, and the HOW, on every question, — were we determined to fall back upon ourselves, and to reduce our faith, till it square with human reason, we must necessarily abandon every point of revelation in its turn, retrace our course, and just remain where we found ourselves before the light of revealed knowledge descended upon us.



Would to God! that on this subject we were only theoretically arguing; but unfortunately I am reasoning from facts. We have observed this joint march of reason and infidelity, in the affair of the reformation. The reformists began by first abjuring what they termed the unreasonable supremacy of the Bishop of Rome,—next the unreasonable authority of the universal Church in the Council of Trent, even after they had appealed to that authority, and pledged themselves to abide by its decisions \*, and having rejected the authority of the Church, soon discovered that her sacraments and mysteries were likewise unreasonable.—Because her doctrine of the real presence in the blessed Eucharist also confounded human reason, they therefore rose up against it, and like the Jews exclaimed, *this saying is hard, and who can*

\* “Against the decree (of the Diet of *Spire*,”) writes Mosheim, “they entered a solemn *protest* on the 19th of April, and appealed to the Emperor and a future general Council.” (Eccl. Hist. vol. iv. p. 73.)

*hear it.* (John vi. 61.) Next they objected to the Mass, as an unreasonable mystery; and, of course, the sacrament of penance or of confession, could not find a friend in reason, since it seemed the most unreasonable article of the Catholic faith.

Reason having conducted her votaries thus far in the career of reforms, conceived it most reasonable to place man's justification in faith alone; and therefore decided that the necessity of good works was an unreasonable obligation—and consequently that prayer, fasting and penance were useless duties. That reason might still be consistent with herself, she was forced to declare the existence of a Purgatory an unreasonable article of faith; and guided by the light of that same reason, which rejected a temporal punishment hereafter, how many of her votaries have gone with her one step farther, and have pronounced the eternal torments of hell also unreasonable! Arguing from the same principle have not Socinus, Hume,

Priestly, and a multitude of others, even dared to deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as an unreasonable point of faith, consequently maintaining that Christianity itself is an imposition and forgery on the credulous? and thus like men pursuing some imaginary phantom, from the pinnacle of Catholic faith, *false reason* has conducted her deluded votaries through every gradation of infidelity, till vanishing from their astonished senses, she finally leaves them on the verge of Atheism. And in this manner she practically demonstrates the truth of our Saviour's words, *if any one will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as the heathen and the publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.)

Proceeding to the consideration of the second class, or those who make scripture their only rule \* in religion, I must repeat

\* It may be said that these discourses are lengthened by many repetitions; and the charge may be in some degree founded. But as I pretend universally to adopt the



the observation I have already made, which is, that the latter rule is nearly as defective as the former. For a rule, to be a rule at all, must be both universal and decisive. Now I maintain, and can easily prove, that the scripture alone is not a general and decisive rule, and therefore is not to be employed as such. My Brethren, as Catholics we all believe, that the sacred scriptures contain the true and revealed word of God: but we also believe and know, that the true and revealed word of God does not consist of dead language and expressions, since they only form the dress in which it is clothed.— We may express the same sentiment in many languages, and yet the sentiment will remain the same. But should a person draw a different meaning from our words, than that which we gave to them ourselves, and intended they should con-

syllogistic form of argument, and my adversaries *will accept nothing upon credit*, I am continually forced into this course. A good general never leaves a point unguarded.

vey to others, it is evident that our meaning has been mistaken, and that the words themselves are no rule. Hence is seen the difficulty of discovering the exact word of God by the aid of scripture only, as also its inadequacy to become a safe and certain rule in religion. The sacred scriptures may be compared to a box holding a treasure. Should you tell me then, that you have the treasure, because it is in the box, I must observe, that without a key, or the secret to open the box, the treasure can be of no use to any one. The scriptures tell us that Jesus spoke to the people in parables, *that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.* (Luke viii. 10 )

My Brethren, I beseech you not to impute to me, or to Catholics in general, any want of respect for the sacred writings : we venerate them as the inspired word of God, yet believe, that some rule is necessary to fix, and declare their real sense ; which rule is the autho-

rity of the Catholic Church. We read the scriptures for the sake of instruction, but form not our faith upon any private interpretation of them. It is now near three centuries since the Protestant reformers, being determined to form their faith from the Bible only, protested against the authority of that Church, which had previously been the steady guide of Christians for more than fifteen hundred years. The result of which proceeding is, that although they have been employed all this time in arranging their creed, they are still disputing, and have not yet determined what their faith shall finally be. Their whole history presents us nothing but a scene of doing, and undoing,—of saying, and unsaying, what had been said before. And whilst Catholics, by adhering to their ancient rule of faith, have never varied in any one point of belief, it is an undeniable fact, that not a year has elapsed in which the faith of the Protestants has not experienced some change.



Now, every change is a tacit admission that it was not right before. In the very beginning, Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zuinglius, and every other, who undertook to reform the indefective religion of Jesus Christ, *searched the scriptures*. But all, thence extracted a different religion, more or less opposed to each other. The reforming heroes of England also, Cranmer, Somerset, and the rest, likewise opened their scriptures in search of religion, and from thence traced the outlines of the Church of England, of a composite kind, and totally distinct from the other reformed communities of the continent. Since that period our countrymen have been sedulously employed in studying and explaining scripture, and the result is, scripture has again formed within the bosom of Protestantism, a multitude of religious sects, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, Methodists, Quakers, Jumpers, Unitarians, and a number of others scarcely known to

us by name. Nay the question is no longer how many religions have been drawn from the scripture, but what possible species of error has not been authorized by an appeal to this fanatical principle\*.

My Brethren, you are no doubt disconcerted by what I have stated, but even should you begin the work again, adopting every precaution, so truly is this the natural consequence of abandoning the steady Catholic rule, the authority of the Universal Church, that this result would follow by an infallible necessity. Left as a vessel without an anchor, at the mercy of the wavering current of fancy and private opinion, as long as every man, by the first, and grand principle of Protestantism is permitted to give to scripture whatever sense is most suitable to his conceptions, (and I never knew the man who did not

\* See the anecdote of John Burnley, inserted in the postscript to the Second Letter to Dr. Marsh.—We may apply to the Reformers, what Cicero said of the ancient philosophers, "*Nihil tam absurdum, quod non dictum sit ab aliquo philosophorum.*"

there discover what he was in search of) all must be doubt and contradiction in religion.—If religion is to depend upon your judgments and fancies, as these are always changing with time and fashion, so must faith continually undergo a new reform. Indeed alteration is so natural and essential to this system, that stability in it would be a phenomenon. We might as soon pretend to be quiet in a ship where all is in motion. Nay I will put this question to any of the reformed, can one individual say that he has never changed his sentiments on matters of revelation, and consequently his faith? Can he name the Protestant accustomed to read the scripture, who gave to it the same explanation at the end of the year, which he did at the beginning? Can he affirm that he ever heard two Protestants reasoning on scripture, who did not disagree? Can he declare that he ever knew that minister of any of the reformed sects, who preached the same scriptural doctrine at the end of



his career which he did at the beginning ? But they were mistaken you say at first, now however, they are right.—Oh, then it is admitted that their judgments had deceived them in explaining scripture.—And if so, by what rule do they know that they are right at present ? Who can answer that they will not change to-morrow ? If once deceived, they may be deceived again. Thus every objection which militates against the authority of private judgment, will equally bear against the authority of scripture explained by private judgment, for they are in fact and practice the same thing.

*Many, says St. Peter, wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. (2 Pet iii. 16.)*

Yet waving every difficulty that I have started, and even granting for the moment, that scripture might be a rule for the learned, how does it appear possible that it can ever become a rule for the ignorant and unlettered ? Are there not millions of such persons however in the world ? and are their souls out of the con-

sideration of Providence? Yet how can scripture be a rule for them? Moreover, is it so easy a task to read, to understand, and to remember the whole Bible? My Brethren, I regard it as an Herculean labour, and such as few are equal to. Thus you perceive the straits to which the heroes of the reformation have reduced you. Deprived of the Catholic and universal rule, two thirds of their congregations are without any rule whatever, and where the preachers substitute themselves and their own opinions, the flocks become the blind followers of blind guides.

Having proved to you, my Brethren, that private judgment, and private interpretation of scripture, can never be decisive rules in revealed points of faith, they being neither safe nor sure, you are eager, no doubt, to hear me propose that principle on which men with confidence may rely. It is simply this, **THE WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN WORD OF GOD, DERIVED THROUGH THE CHANNEL OF THE CATHO-**

**LIC CHURCH OF CHRIST.** This rule is safe, because it is certain ; and it is sure, because it is given by Jesus Christ himself ; *and if any one will not hear the Church, he says, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican* (Ma t. xviii. 17.)—Moreover, it is implicitly accepted by all who make this apostolic profession, **I BELIEVE THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

We have an example of the early application of this rule by the apostles, in the first age of the Church ; for we read in the fifteenth chapter of their Acts, that they decided a controverted question of faith, and another of discipline, by the sole authority of the Church assembled in Council, and declared in the name of the Holy Ghost, that Christians were not subject to the Jewish law of circumcision, — ordaining at the same time that *they should abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled* From that period down all antiquity, the authority of the Church has shone like a meteor in the



midst of obscurity—and whenever innovation in doctrine, or doubt in matters of faith, endangered the unity of the fold of Christ, it blazed forth, to give new light to truth. The cities of Nice, Sardica, Constantinople, Rome, and Trent, can bear testimony to the decision of every religious question that at present agitates Christendom, and distinctly tell us what has been the judgment of the Catholic Church upon these points. These decisions, however, are not arbitrary, but formed upon the revealed word transmitted through the letter of the scripture; and the writings of the first fathers of the Church, express the individual faith of those prelates, assembled from the nations of the earth; who moreover, representing the provincial and metropolitan churches over which they presided, — in this manner declare the doctrine of the Universal Church.

Therefore, the strength of the Catholic rule of faith, compared with the other two of Protestants, is as the testimony of one man,

to the evidence of the whole Catholic Church. Well, therefore, might the Protestant *Tillotson* say, “Luther appeared stoutly against the gross errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, and for a long time stood alone \*;”—for what is said of *Luther*, may be applied to every individual of the reformed religion. I trust, my Brethren, it is hardly necessary for me to say that the Catholic rule is agreeable to the doctrine of all the ancient fathers, who in their controversial disputes are for ever appealing to the authority of the Church. The learned *Tertullian*, who flourished in the second century, says, that “we ought not to contend with them on scripture, since the quoting of scripture will only serve to excite passions, and irritate the mind. One sect does not receive certain parts of scripture; or if it admits them, it adapts them by additions or subtractions to the nature of its own form of religion; and though it receive them entire, nevertheless it alters

\* Sermon, xxix.

them by giving different explanations. NOW A FALSE INTERPRETATION WILL INJURE TRUTH, as much as the corruption of the text. What can you effect," he continues, "you, who are so learned in scripture, if you only defend what is denied by others, and deny what is defended by them \*? Verily you lose nothing but your

\* Before we enter into controversy, it is always necessary to come to an agreement with the adversary, as to principle. For should a man with principle enter the lists with an opponent bound by none, he will have to contend with all the disadvantages of those, who carry on an honourable warfare against a banditti. Principles are to logic, what the laws of war are to the soldier. In contending therefore with the philosopher, the adversaries should confine themselves to first principles. But if a Catholic argue against a Church of England Protestant, their deciding principle should be Church authority, because both admit it. Whereas again, in disputing with a Methodist or Dissenter, the Catholic may appeal to Scripture, but not to the authority of the Church, because the latter rule is not admitted by them. Until the parties agree, therefore, on some principle by which their differences on Scripture may be determined, they should wisely abstain from interminable war. By Dissenters frequently appealing to the first ages of religion, we might suppose that they admitted the principle of TRADITION. (See the two Letters to Dr. Marsh, by the Rev. P. G.)



breath in the dispute, and gain nothing but vexation. Therefore we should not urge the scriptures, nor repose our strength in them.—We communicate by a unity of doctrine with the apostolical churches; this,” says he, “is the testimony of truth \*.” —“Christ,” writes St. Augustin, “has left his testament with the Church; whatever therefore be the interpretation which the Church gives to it, that is the one which you are to give †.”

Having therefore proved the Catholic rule of faith from scripture and the fathers, I wish you to observe that the Christian Church is a religious society, or body corporate; but as no society can preserve an existence unless all the members be subject to one authority; (for otherwise they must fall a prey to division, anarchy, and confusion,) so if authority be necessary, where can it be so well lodged as in the whole?—Can it be

\* Lib. cont. Hæret. c. 17.

† Serm. de Unit. Eccl.

any where so secure against bias, inconsistency, and deception? Yet you say we may be deceived—Waving this point at present, I will just observe, that you must be the slaves of pride to believe that you are individually right, and the whole community wrong.—You object again that considerable bodies have refused to submit to the authority of the community, and have consequently withdrawn from it, forming themselves into sects—as in the instances of the Greek schism, and in the Protestant Reformation. This is the necessary consequence of resistance; but, my Brethren, do you not perceive that this proceeding directly tends to effect the destruction of the Christian Church as a society? Do you not observe that the Protestant Church has been in a state of dissolution from that very period, and that the various subdivided sects about us, are but the crumbling fragments of a great ruin? My Brethren, I confidently hope that you see the necessity of steering, in

matters of faith and discipline, by the authority of the Catholic Church. It is the only rule which is suited to the necessities of ALL,—to the high and to the low,—the learned divine and the unlettered savage; and it is the only guide by which a great portion of the christian world can be now saved from the horrors of infidelity, to which it is fast approaching.

Let the Protestant sects take their choice in the alternative before them, of either uniting with the great fold of the Catholic Church, from which they once separated, or of rushing forward into a state of fanaticism, and Unitarian infidelity. It requires, my Brethren, no prophetic spirit to foresee a change of religion in this country; I announce it publicly to the world, and to maintain the contrary sentiment would be as absurd as to expect a calm when all forebodes a storm. Yet this change, whatever it may be, will not proceed from Catholics. Their religion lays too many restraints upon the passions, easily to make



proselytes. It will be produced by that spirit of fanaticism and infidelity, which is spreading so fast through the land, and which, if not timely checked, may one day bury in a revolutionary vortex both church and state. In the end, however, disorder will work its own cure, and to the storm will succeed a calm. For the minds of men, wearied by endless changes and reforms, and the sport of their own passions, will see how vain and imperfect are all human systems of religion, and turning towards the everlasting rock of the Catholic Church, will confess that her authority alone can restore order to the Christian world. This sentiment has been held by Grotius, and the more eminent of the Protestant divines, among whom I will quote Thorndike, who writes, "I confess I can hope for no good end of any dispute, without supposing that sense of the article concerning *one Catholic Church*, which hath carried me through this discourse, for the *principle* on which all matter in debate

is to be tried :—which had it been agreed upon, might have prevented all breaches, and without agreeing upon it, leaves all disputes in religion endless, and without hope of conviction or satisfaction on this side or that.—And I have shewn you the Church of Rome hath, and ought to have, a regular pre-eminence over the rest of Christendom—and he that is able to judge, and willing to consider, shall find that pre-eminence the only reasonable means to preserve so great a body in unity.”——  
 “Until the dregs of our times, I do not know that it was ever disputed, that Christians are not bound to be members of one and the same visible Church \*.”

My Brethren, as the dove returned to the ark, not finding where her foot might rest, so that all one day return to the safe ark of the Catholic Church, and thus secure the salvation of their valuable souls, is my earnest prayer.

\* Just Weights.

## SERMON XXVIII.

### ON THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

*The Church of the living God is the pillar  
and ground of truth. (1 Tim. iii. 15.)*

AS the attainment of historical knowledge is much facilitated by fixing in the memory certain epochs, or points of time, to which we refer the events connected with them, so in controversial researches after truth, considerable labour will be spared, if directing our attention to the leading and fundamental questions, we leave the others to follow as a train of consequences. The mind, seldom adequate to judge with accuracy on a variety of matter at the same time, is rather confused by different objects, and often rendered incapable of coming to any decision whatever. Moreover, if we are determined to hold



our decision suspended till we have fully resolved every particular doubt and difficulty, as they may successively arise to our imaginations, it is scarcely possible that we ever form an opinion ; for as new objections will incessantly arise, whilst the old will periodically return, the mind will be drawn into a vain and endless pursuit.

Whereas by selecting a few of the cardinal, and most consequential articles, and resolving the others upon them, we shall reduce the whole within the compass of a more limited boundary, and make it easy for the judgment to determine in favour of truth. I would not have you, for instance, contend that one form of worship is less defective than another,—that the religion of the Dissenter is preferable to that of the Anabaptist,—or that holier characters are found among Catholics, than in the Church of England. — No, rather resolve this one question decisive of the others: — which of these societies can be said to be the ONE, HOLY, CA-

THOLIC, and APOSTOLICAL Church of Christ? Again, waste not your labour in cavilling about the propriety or impropriety of offering adoration to the sacrament of the altar,—the excellence of the mass,—or the efficacy of communion under one kind :—rather let the decision of these points merge from the question of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine.—Moreover, I would not have you perplex your understandings with all that has been written on the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome,—the invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, purgatory, confession, and the rites and ceremonies of the Church :—but first determine this important point in debate, whether there be an authority in the Church of Christ, which should be our guide in matters of faith, doctrine, and discipline. Because, judging by that rule, you will concentrate truth and error within a very limited circle, and seeing them in their real characters, will find it easy to discriminate.

Such then is the nature of the question I intend to discuss this day ; the infallibility of the Church in Council on matters of faith ; one, vast in all its bearings, and important by its consequences ; involving in its decision every controversy of faith that has ever been argued by Christians. My Brethren, addressing the world, I invite this day every sect and tribe that owns a Saviour, to hear their causes judged in the question now before us. For if there be an infallible authority in the Catholic Church of Christ, then your faith must square with that rule :—but if there be not, then believe what you please, maintain what you will, there is no guide in faith, nor standard of belief. My intention therefore is, to shew, first, that the authority of the Church in matters of faith is necessarily infallible, — and secondly, that it is declared infallible by the promises and assurances of Jesus Christ.

My Brethren, I will leave it to the common sense of any of the present assembly to say, if they could be easy in a house,



whose foundations were insecure? Would they not be continually restless, and desirous of trying some other habitation? Let us suppose then, that in this state of insecurity, the proprietor nevertheless endeavours to quiet their restless anxiety, by telling them that the walls certainly will not fall for the present, and that they may repose with safety in the house. Would that reconcile them to the idea of remaining in it with their families? My Brethren, judging by my own feelings, I should rather conceive their answer would be: it is very possible the house may not fall to-day, to-morrow, or the next day;—but since we have no assurance that it will not fall, and thus bury us under its ruins, we feel no inclination to continue your tenants, and shall therefore endeavour to fix ourselves more securely.

My Brethren, I believe this comparison to be perfectly in point, and illustrative of the subject before us. Man, in the most interesting and important concern of life, the attainment of eternal happiness by the means

of a revealed religion, is called upon to take for his rule and guide the authority of the Church. Surely then the questions he would naturally propose are, Shall I be safe under the guidance of that authority? Shall I be certain of not erring by that rule? Were the answers in the affirmative, it would at least be a motive for acceding to the principle, and he would understand himself. But could you not offer him this assurance,—could you only grant him the honour of blundering by the counsels of others, instead of his own,—he would probably say,—this is a privilege of which I am by no means ambitious. Since you cannot promise me security in the authority of your Church, I am as well without that restraint, and prefer to enjoy an independent freedom.—The authority of the Church, my Brethren, has been made the rule by Jesus Christ himself; *If any one will not hear the Church, he says, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.)

It would therefore be a departure from those principles of wisdom and eternal justice, by which the Almighty is supposed to be guided, if in acting by this rule, man could ever deserve censure.— Hence arises the necessity of its being *infallible*, otherwise God would place himself in the dilemma of necessarily rewarding what he is bound to condemn, a reflection, insulting to his wisdom,—or by a tyranny most irreconcilable to his justice, he must punish us for errors, into which we had been led, through obedience to his laws.— Indeed, unless this rule be infallible, it must be confessed that man might be often placed in the circumstance of necessarily offending God; for if erroneous, it would be criminal to obey it, and if enjoined, criminal to resist. Guilt would therefore be the consequence of acquiescence, as well as of disobedience. Now can it be imagined that God would place himself in such a relation with his creature?—He would become the author of our ruin and final damnation.



This authority moreover is proved to be necessarily infallible by the necessity of faith. *Without faith*, says St Paul, *it is impossible to please God.* (Heb xi. 6) Faith is that full and well-grounded assent which the mind gives to the revelations of God. *Go*, said Jesus Christ to his apostles, *teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;—preach the gospel to every creature, he who believes shall be saved, and he who believes not, shall be condemned.* (Matt. xxviii. 20. Mark xvi. 16.) If it be absolutely necessary to believe the truths of revelation, it is equally necessary that we have the means of learning them. If God, in right of his infinite wisdom and power, be authorized to claim our entire assent and confidence, we have an equal claim upon his justice, that we be not deceived nor led into error; which we have no possible means of avoiding, otherwise than by an authority that is *infallible*.—For as I have already shewn, to depend upon falli-

bility, in a concern of such importance, would really be to rely on a broken reed, and the rule would prove a temptation rather than a guide. Hence St. Paul characterizes the Church of the living God, *the pillar, and ground of truth.* (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

Notwithstanding the ample discussion which the authority of the scripture has already received, I am aware many may yet feel inclined to trust to a private interpretation of the inspired volume: therefore to convince them, in a few words, of the necessity of an infallible authority, somewhere lodged, independently of scripture, I will ask them, by what rule they know that the text contains the inspired word of God? By what rule can they be satisfied of that fact? In those disputed points of faith on which Christians are divided,—unassisted by this unerring guide, we have no means of bringing any question to a conclusion; for what is asserted by one, may be denied by ano-

ther, and neither will conceive themselves bound to yield to an authority, which it is admitted may lead them into error\*? The Catholics and the Protestants, for instance, are directly opposed on the holy sacrament of communion, a most essential part however of revealed faith. The Catholic maintains, that by a divine operation, the consecrated elements become the true body and blood of Jesus Christ. This is denied by the Protestant, who affirms, that consecration makes no change either substantially, or accidentally, in these elements. On this point therefore they are directly at issue, and how shall this question of faith be decided? To the scriptures,—methinks I hear every one exclaim!—Well, the Protestant opens his

\* “Heresies,” writes the Poet, “have all the same pretence,

And quote the scripture in their own defence :

Squadrons of texts, drawn out on either side,

How shall the controverted truth be tried,

Without a last appeal to some unfailing guide.”

}

*Dryden.*



Testament and reads, in the words of Christ, *this is my body, this is my blood*. He believes however, these words are to be understood figuratively.

On the other hand the Catholic examines his Testament, and on the same sentence, remarks, that as it contains no expression directing him to receive it figuratively, he must understand the words in their plain and literal sense. Here then, I repeat, we are directly at issue ; and where is the authority that is to decide between us? Call in scripture if you please, and require from it a declaration of it's meaning. You will be still unsatisfied, and every text will require another to explain it. It is on this account, that in every controversial work and discourse, we behold the Protestants themselves appealing to the authority of the Fathers, and to the practice of the primitive Church. "The testimony of the ancient Fathers," writes a great Oxford divine \*, "was esteemed one of the best

\* Dr. Mant, *Appeal to the Gospel*, p. 306.

criteria of the sense of the holy scriptures." The learned Dr. Marsh of the University of Cambridge, refers the religious polemic to the dictionary of "*biblical criticisms*;" while another more extraordinary Protestant divine of Dublin\*, places this requisite authority in the episcopacy of the Church. The Church of England herself maintains, in her 20th Article, "that the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith."

All which only serves to prove, that it is necessary to have a church authority, as I have already shewn†. Now let us once introduce it as a fallible authority, and I trust for once only, for the contemptuous appearance it will thus make, must deter every one from ever recurring

\* Barwick's Treatise on the Church.

† Even John Wesley studied the scriptures by tradition. "From five to seven," he writes, "we read the Bible together, carefully comparing it (that we might not lean to our understandings) with the writings of the earliest ages." *Portraiture of Methodism*, p. 48.

again to such useless, and helpless support. Finding therefore that the question cannot be decided solely by scripture, it is agreed to refer it to this fallible authority of the Church: and as the Church would consequently decide in favour of one, or the other, or in contradiction to both, the probable result would be, that those who only expected a favourable verdict would not acquiesce in the decision; and I think, not without some reasonable ground. For the argument would be; the Church is liable to err like ourselves: and as we believe it has actually erred, in this very decision, we therefore consider ourselves authorized, to retain our opinions, until we have a certain rule for determining. But this rule can only be *infallibility*;—for between fallibility and infallibility there is no mean.

Priestly himself acknowledged, that although others might reason, it is the Catholic only, who by principle is enabled to communicate conviction.—Every day indeed proves to us how impossible it



is for Protestants, to refute, and convince those sectaries who have separated from them.—For by what principle can they extend conviction to others, who have it not themselves? The most infatuated fanatic is equal to enter the lists with such opponents, and the most favourable expectation they can form is to retire from the contest with the same sentiments they carried to it \*. Hence we are able to account for the modern dislike to controversy, because leading to no result ! Hence we discover the cause of that weakness and indecision which Protestants universally betray in arguing with other sectaries ! for to preserve consistency, they should erase from the epistles of St. Paul, heresy and schism, as terms which have lost their meaning. Since where there is

\* Butler's Life of Bossuet (p. 43) contains a short account of a very curious conference held between that prelate and a Calvinist minister,—in which the inconsistency and contradiction of Protestant principles most evidently appear.

no line to follow, there can be no deviation; where no certainty in faith, no obstinacy in error. *For where there is no law,* says the apostle, *neither is there transgression.* (Rom. iv. 15.) Between the Catholic and the Protestant principle, therefore, there is this difference; that whilst the Catholic principle is adequate to its end, the Protestants attempt to overthrow certainty by uncertainty; and on the other hand, employ uncertainty to establish certainty.

My Brethren, as I have demonstrated the necessity of an infallible rule in the authority of the Church, there is no need of any other proof for believing, that Jesus Christ made that authority infallible when he proposed it to man. For if you reflect that his object was to establish his *Church perfect, and without blemish*,—and that the salvation of men through succeeding generations was the end of every act and thought of his mortal life, you must be convinced that he would not leave this

work unfinished, and inadequate to the great design in view. As infallibility, therefore, is absolutely necessary to effect both these objects, infallibility must form an essential property of the Catholic Church of Christ.—Let us then examine those promises and assurances which Jesus Christ has addressed to his Church on this subject, and we shall perceive that they are in direct conformity with every principle I have laid down. In the first place, to convince us that he has the power to fulfil his engagements, Jesus Christ addressed the apostles in these terms: *All power is given me, in heaven and on earth—as my Father hath sent me, I also send you.* (Matt. xxviii. 18. John xx. 21.)

He who can begin by such a declaration, writes a great doctor\* of the Church, is able to effect whatever is most difficult, and to promise whatever is most excellent. Well then was Jesus Christ privileged to say; *and upon this rock I will build my Church,*

\* Bossuet.



*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: (Matt. xvi. 18.)* an assurance that the Church shall always be divinely protected in her *indefectibility* and *infallibility*. Now the promises of Jesus Christ were made specially to the apostles, and through them to their successors, constituting the government of the Church. *To thee*, addressing the head, he says, *I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven*,—and turning to the whole body, he continues; *and whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.—Going therefore teach ye all nations,—behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world—who hears you hears me, who despises you despises me—and I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the spirit of truth. (Matt. xvi. 19.—xviii. 18.—xxviii. 19. Luke x. xvi. John xiv. 16.)*

By these promises we perceive that Jesus Christ has most intimately allied the authority of the Church with the authority of God, and established the infallibility of the one on the infallibility of the other. By declaring to the whole world that *he will abide* with the pastors of the Church, and direct them *in all truth, till the end of time*,—by announcing to all, that *in hearing them, they hear him*, his honour and word are pledged to protect them from error, and the command of a God enjoins us in their decisions of faith to distinguish the voice of eternal truth. It is unnecessary for me to comment further on these passages of scripture; they support the plain declaration of my text, that *the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of truth*; and those who want a stronger motive for believing it, must shew that something stronger than the word and assurance of Jesus Christ can be offered. With these promises therefore before us, I maintain that it would be blasphemy to

assert, that the Church of Christ is liable to fail in faith or doctrine, so greatly would it impeach the honour and veracity of God ; for were it possible now, or at any period, that it could yield to error, or depart from the line of revealed truth, there must be an end to all human and divine faith,—reason itself must dissolve into an empty nothing, and this mighty work for which a God descended from heaven, would be more imperfect and discordant,—more inconsistent with itself, than what our own natural efforts would be capable of producing. Moreover observe, that could it come to pass, that for an interval the revealed religion of Jesus Christ should cease to exist, independently of this breach of contract between God and his creature, it would require the same exertion of supernatural power and authority, to re-establish it after its momentary defection, as was requisite in the first instance, when miraculously preached by our Redeemer and his apostles.



But you ask, where has Jesus Christ fixed this infallibility,—in what part of his Church has he lodged it? In no part, my Brethren, but in the whole, or what in a moral sense is equivalent to the whole. The Church of Jesus Christ, according to the definition of the apostle, is a body having a head and members. (1 *Cor.* 12.) Carry this in your recollection, my Friends, as the distinguishing sign which the Church holds out to all Christians. For where there is no head there is no Church \*. It is by the union of the members with the head, and of the head with the members, that the Church exists; or in other words, it is by the union of the Bishops with their head, the chief Bishop and successor of St. Peter, that the government of the Catholic Church is formed. Here is lodged that glorious infallibility promised by Jesus Christ. Not, as you may observe, in the head separately, or in any member divided

\* When a see is vacant, the Church has the episcopal representative in the chapter.

from the head ; but it is in the head and members united that it will always be found. Now the Bishops of the Church, as directing and communicating with their flocks, may be said to be their representatives ; consequently, whether dispersed or assembled, they constitute with their head that visible tribunal which represents the universal fold of Jesus Christ, to which tribunal that necessary infallibility is promised.

Many objections to our doctrine of infallibility will be removed, you will say, if I can make my hearers understand how this tribunal is to pass a decision, which must be in itself infallibly true. Are the individual members, you ask, assisted by divine inspiration \* ? My Brethren, recol-

\* The common objection of Protestants against the Catholic principle of infallibility is, "how can fallible man form an infallible decision?" Few Protestants I believe really understand the question. Catholics do not believe that the Bishops of the Church are *individually* more gifted with infallibility, than with *indefectibility*. As every individual is mortal, so every individual is possibly fallible.

lect that Jesus Christ has said ; *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them.* (Matt. xviii. 20.)

Observe then, my Brethren, in the first place, that the Church never pretends to infallibility, except in matters of faith ;—in matters of mere undogmatical fact, and

Nevertheless, as we can easily believe that they will not all die in a body, but as a society will exist to the end of the world, so we can easily believe that they will not fail in a body as to faith, but with the divine assistance will ever bear, in their collective character, an infallible testimony of the truth revealed. And thus *Catholic infallibility* rises out of *individual fallibility*—as *moral certitude* springs from evidences which are individually *uncertain*. As the one is a first principle in human ethics, so the other is a first principle of the Christian faith.

The Catholic Church, in like manner, attributes no personal infallibility to the Pope in matter of faith, otherwise than as he speaks in quality of her official organ—or, as it is theologically expressed, *ex cathedra*. In condemning propositions therefore (which are always condemned as contrary to, or subversive of some revealed truth, and frequently abstractedly from the context of the work in which they appear) the Pope speaks as the organ, not the teacher of the Church, and his authority as such is final. It is in this particular sense also, that it is sometimes characterised by Catholics *infallible*, because resting on the *infallibility* of the Church.



civil policy, she may err like any other tribunal, and therefore to such never requires the interior assent of any, but is satisfied with a respectful submission. Observe, in the second place, that this tribunal, dispersed or collected, never pretends to the authority of framing a new article of faith; but only of declaring what that faith is, which has been handed down from generation to generation: thus as an immortal witness determining what was originally and divinely revealed. For when a supernatural truth is believed through the two hemispheres from the rising to the setting sun,—when it has been taught through succeeding ages, from the earliest period, it can have no other origin than revelation, and as such must be infallibly true: for it would exceed all human efforts to establish universally even one speculative point of doctrine\*.

\* The Church does not pretend to the knowledge of all truth in heaven and on earth, but only requires her members to believe, that she does not insist on the acquiescence of the faithful to any point of faith, which is not *infallibly* true.

Now it would not be so difficult to shew, as some may imagine, that this most sacred and learned tribunal, composed of the Bishops of the Universal Church, has every requisite properly to constitute it a traditional assembly. For it is a council enduring without interruption, and either dispersed, or collected, has subsisted from the time that Jesus Christ commissioned it, in these terms; *Going therefore teach ye all nations, all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.\** (Matt. xxviii.

\* There is nothing more unaccountable than the violent antipathy Protestants have conceived against TRADITION, though they are as familiar with it in practice as Catholics. Indeed *tradition* is the only channel by which men can acquire religion—it is the clue to every art and science;—it makes the bishop, the priest, the parson, the clerk, the king, the magistrate, the courtier, the tutor, the scholar, the general, the officer, the soldier, the engineer, the philosopher, the mathematician, the astronomer, the chymist, the physician, the surgeon, the admiral, the sailor, the pilot, the navigator, the geographer, the judge, the statesman, the politician, the merchant, the mechanic, the ma-

18.) When you reflect also that every new member has only been the accession of an

nufacturer, the tradesman, the architect, the sculptor, the painter, the engraver, the musician, the singer, the actor, the gardener, the farmer, the fisherman, the sportsman, the master, the mistress, the servant, the nurse, &c.

The TRADITION which is used in the Catholic Church is,

1<sup>o</sup>. Scriptural tradition, or the books of the Bible.

2<sup>o</sup>. Historical tradition.

3<sup>o</sup>. The works of the ancient fathers.

4<sup>o</sup>. The ancient liturgies.

5<sup>o</sup>. The ancient monuments.

6<sup>o</sup>. The universal practice of the Church.

7<sup>o</sup>. The errors of ancient heresies.

8<sup>o</sup>. The acts of councils.

9<sup>o</sup>. The customs of Rome and the Patriarchal Sees.

Now with the help of this different species of evidence the Catholic Church decides. What then prevents the Protestant from submitting? A want of faith!

However, though the Protestants betray such a violent aversion to *tradition*, they incessantly admit it in practice, and continually appeal to the *traditions* of the four first centuries, and allow their own works to be evidence against themselves\*. The very Unitarians endeavour to establish their Socinian principles by an appeal to antiquity. In fine, no difference can be discovered between Catholics and Protestants on this head, if we except that the latter always reject the principle when it bears against themselves.

\* See the different courses of the Oxford Bampton Lectures; and the quotations from Dr. Marsh's Lectures, in the Second Letter to him by the Rev. P. G.



individual to an existing body, and generally speaking, a character eminent for his virtue, and learning,—when you observe, that the sacred scriptures, and the works of the Fathers, have been ever before them, to direct them to the truth, and that, as at present, the failing faith of one was upheld by the rest, it is not difficult to understand how revelation has been transmitted in the Catholic Church, and consequently, how this tribunal, has never failed to decide with the assistance of God, by the infallible rule of his word.

Thus, there appears nothing more incomprehensible, in this wonderful *infallibility*, than in the promised *indefectibility* of the Church. Simple in its nature, yet certain in its effects, it is supernaturally infallible, because grounded on the promises of Jesus Christ. It is then by the authority of this infallible tribunal, that the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ has been directed in the true faith, during eighteen hundred years,

Whenever the peace and union of the faithful were disturbed, by the broachers of new and erroneous doctrines, that the voice of truth might be more distinctly heard, the watchful guardians of the flock assembled, and with the weight of a general council of the Church, bore testimony to the errors of these reformers, anathematizing such as obstinately adhered to them. Of the first council, we have a clear account in the Acts of the Apostles, whose irrevocable decisions were announced in the name of the Church, and of the Holy Ghost. (*Acts xv.*)

It cannot be doubted that the apostles received verbally from Jesus Christ, or through inspiration, every necessary knowledge for the government of the Church,—but especially when on any question they should be required in a more formal manner to set forth the doctrine of revelation. The acts of this council therefore became a rule for all similar occasions ;—and three hundred years after, in the name of the

Holy Ghost and the Church, the great Council of Nice passed an irrevocable condemnation on Arius and his errors, and stamped them with an anathema. It is on these ancient models that the Church has acted in every succeeding age, when new errors have been started :—and it was by an exact conformity of conduct, that in the 16th century the successors of the apostles assembled in the ever memorable general Council of Trent, and in the name of the Holy Ghost and the Church, anathematized the errors of Luther and his associates, as contrary to scripture, tradition, and revelation :—a decision which, if there be truth in these words of Christ, *who hears you, hears me*, can never be reversed in time or eternity. Here, then, is the reason, the motive, and the explanation of the conduct of Catholics !—Hence all may learn, that we refuse to receive the Protestant faith and religion, because it has been condemned in all its branches by the infallible authority of God, and his Universal



Church ! Hence all may understand, why the Catholics for these three centuries past, have preferred the cruelties of persecution, to the advantages of conformity in their native land ! It was because, valuing their eternal happiness more than any object in this world, they feared the declaration of Jesus Christ,—*If any one will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.)

Besides, who are they that pretend to tell us, that we are absolutely not to view the decisions of this and other general councils as infallible ? Have these persons any pretensions to infallibility ? No ! then by what right are they to form a rule for others ? Really such conduct partakes both of arrogance and folly.—My Brethren, in corroboration of all I have advanced this day, you have only to look to facts. During the course of 18 centuries, in which so many councils have assembled, not an example can be produced of any formal decision of faith being re-

versed, changed, or amended ; and what was once decreed has never ceased to be preached and taught by the Universal Church. Is not this an undeniable testimony that she has ever been guided by the spirit of truth ? Perhaps you will object that councils have often interfered in temporal affairs. True, my Brethren, and as often have given proofs that in these they acted in a human capacity. *My kingdom*, said Jesus Christ to his apostles, *is not of this world*. (John xviii. 36.) — In these instances the councils acted as civil parliaments convened from every quarter of the globe ;—as a body of citizens, and not as an assembly of pastors.

In conclusion, then, how grand, how noble is this sentiment, that whilst time is working changes in every department of the universe, and all things tend, from the moment of their existence, to dissolution, the Catholic Church of Christ has been placed upon an eternal *rock*, against which *the gates of hell* can never prevail. Empires

may rise and fall, and revolutions convulse the globe, YET SHE SHALL STAND by this never failing promise, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass.* (Matt. xxiv. 35.)





## SERMON XXIX.

ON THE MOTIVES FOR RECEIVING THE  
FAITH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*If I had not done among them the works  
which no other man hath done, they would  
not sin;—but now they have both seen  
and hated both me and my Father. (John  
xvi. 24.)*

SOMETHING so sweet and amiable is attached to the very idea of liberty, something so grateful is experienced in the possession of it, that we cannot be surprised if men, in every circumstance, covet independence. In their eagerness however for liberty, whether mental or civil, they should beware not to advance too far, because liberty terminates, and licentiousness begins, where the mind forgets to obey that principle which should

direct it. True civil liberty is the absence of every restraint, which can be dispensed with, without detriment to the happiness of society; and mental independence, the right of dissenting till a just reason for acquiescence is offered. As laws, therefore, which are necessary for the protection of society, are not unfavourable to civil liberty, so the presence of motives determining the will to an assent, are not subversive of mental freedom.

Men often lie under delusion, in supposing their fellow creatures the slavish dupes of prejudice, when their conduct, if properly considered, will be found strictly rational. For reason, which is the soul of man, acts well, and in quality of a free agent, when she acts from a just motive,—and only becomes a slave, when she is directed by any other principle. It is true, we all feel a strong inclination from nature to act as we please, yet often perceive a superior motive for obeying a different impulse. In conforming, therefore, to the latter princi-

ple, we act wisely and consistently, because we make a sacrifice of temporary pleasure to real benefit. My intention then, is to shew that, in professing the Catholic faith, we are not slaves to opinion, but hold it on account of motives which direct reason herself to yield a free and unrestrained assent. Should this preamble be unintelligible to the humbler class of my flock, I trust it will receive some further illustrations from the succeeding reflections.

Accused, my Brethren, of being slaves to opinions, and of determining, in matters of religion, without any rational motive, we are also charged with resting our faith on the combined authorities of scripture and the Church, and with pretending, by a delusive mode of reasoning, to prove one by the other;—that is, by producing scripture in support of the Church, and on the other hand, by appealing to the Church in support of scripture. Verily, my Friends, if such were the basis of our system of religion, or such the foundation of



our faith, it would not only be tottering and faulty, but we should justly merit the imputations cast upon us. Things, however, are differently circumstanced.—Our faith ultimately hinges upon neither scripture nor the Church, nor does it oscitate between authorities. In heaven itself are its foundations fixed, and from the revelations of God miraculously established, we derive the evidence for both scripture and the Church. Here is the rock on which we build :—no sandy or uncertain bottom, for God himself and eternity *must pass away, before his word can.* To comprehend me, consider the manner in which the gospel was first announced.

Jesus having preached his doctrine through the cities of Judea, it reached the ears of the disciples of John the Baptist, who, as the sacred historians relate, came to the Redeemer and said : *Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another ?* (Matt. xi. 3.) The answer he returned, will shew the testimony on which he in-

tended the Christian faith should be built. Go, said he, and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (Matt. xi. 4, 5.)—Again, the Evangelist informs us, that as Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch, the Jews therefore came round about him, and said to him, *How long dost thou hold our souls in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* Hear then the answer which Jesus gave: *I speak to you, and you believe not; the works that I do in the name of my Father they give testimony of me.* (John x. 23, 24, 25.) Contemplating also the preaching of the gospel by the apostles, we likewise observe, that they rested the truth of their doctrine upon the unequivocal testimony of their miracles; of which a circumstantial account may be found in their *Acts.* *All Jerusalem was witness to the prodigies they wrought, insomuch, that the*

*inhabitants brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least, might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities ; (Acts v. 15.) and they were all healed. And as St. Mark informs us, the apostles preached every where, the Lord co-operating and confirming the word with signs that followed. (xvi. 20)*

It is in these miracles, then, that we behold the foundations of the Christian faith, because in them we contemplate the testimonies of the Omnipotent himself.—By a miracle, my Brethren, we mean a supernatural sign, or an effect that is above the laws of nature, and its ordinary operations ; which can only be the act of HIM, who originally founded nature's laws. When God therefore thus interposes, in testimony of truth, we receive the word on the strength of his authority, and he himself becomes the ultimate foundation of our faith,—and the ground on which rest both



Scripture and the Church.—Is there any thing slavish then in submitting to the word of God?—Is it a degradation for the mind to decide according to such evidences?—The mind, a moral agent, always acts from impulse; and to decide without a motive, is the characteristic of the fool.—When we determine therefore, in consequence of miraculous testimony, can it be said that we act without a sufficient motive? But these decisions, you say, are often in opposition to the evidence which some of the senses bear, and therefore to bind the understanding to such an unnatural assent, is completely to enslave the judgment.

My Brethren, these different evidences unfold to us nothing contradictory;—the divine testimony is not opposed to the human, but simply evinces what is secret to the other. The senses, for instance, give evidence of the human nature of Jesus Christ, but his miracles attest that he was also God. *The Word was made flesh*

*and dwelt among us.* (John i. 14.) The senses in the same manner give testimony that the Eucharist has all the properties of the material element ;—but divine authority proves to us that it is *substantially* the real body of Christ. (*John vi.*)

I have already observed, that the mind always acts from some impulse.—In deciding a question of faith then, the only inquiry is, whether the evidence of a miracle, be sufficiently strong to found a belief independently of the senses?—My position therefore is, that if the judgment be in unison with the strongest impulse, the mind forms a consistent and unrestrained decision. Whereas if it be formed on the weaker evidence, it must be strained, unprincipled, and inconsistent. Now a miracle, my Brethren, is the strongest evidence that can be produced to dispose the mind to an assent, because it is exclusively the testimony of God ; which being infallible, whilst that of the senses is often mistaken, is therefore the one which reason

should prefer, in every circumstance. Can it then be said, in submitting to the authority of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, established by miraculous and supernatural signs,—can it be affirmed, I say, that in submitting to her authority the mind becomes enslaved? or that the understanding yields a blind and irrational assent? Without pretending to superior abilities, I may claim my share of common sense, and on the strength of that, I maintain, that reason herself dictates to me the propriety and consistency of this submission.—For be pleased to observe, that the objects of revealed faith (the present subject of our attention) are, as I have said, not in contradiction to human reason:—above that faculty, indeed they are, but contrary to it, they cannot be, without involving God in a contradiction with himself, whose very essence is indivisible truth.

When, therefore, the apostolic ministers of God, and his Church announce to



me the mystery of the Trinity, on one hand, I may feel a disposition to refuse my assent, because my reason cannot comprehend this mystery. But on the other hand, adverting to the miracles, wrought in testimony of its being truth,—contemplating a Lazarus, for instance, risen from his grave, and observing the blind, the lame, and the dumb, cured in the name of the God of heaven by these same ministers, reason herself instantaneously does homage to such unequivocal and divine evidences, and silently commands me to yield assent though she cannot comprehend the mystery.—Thus the soul offers the most acceptable homage to God, and on the altar of humble obedience, like Abraham immolating his offspring, sacrifices to her Creator those faculties she received from him.

The same may be said, in respect to baptism, confession, and the other mysteries, which are revealed objects of faith, and equally above, though not in opposition to human reason.—When I taste, feel, and exa-

mine, for example, the holy sacrament of the altar, my exterior senses tell me, that it has all the properties and appearances of bread and wine; but when the authority of God's ministers, (declaring it to be, moreover, in *substance*, the true body and blood of his own incarnate Son, under the accidents of bread and wine,) is supported by the miracles just mentioned, human reason falls prostrate before her God, and directs the understanding to yield a full assent, as the homage due to the Majesty of an infinite Being.—I believe therefore these mysteries with a conviction, not more liable to be shaken, than that with which I believe my own existence \*.—And I maintain that this faculty of reason, is not more en-

\* I am here called upon to notice the Protestant expression *persuasion* as improper among Catholics. To speak of the *Catholic Church—faith—or religion*, is to use a language intelligible to all. But to talk of the *persuasion* of Catholics, is absolute nonsense, and evidence that they who use the expression are not acquainted with the principles of their faith. For what has persuasion to do with conviction?—the one necessarily implies the absence of the other :—in short, the expression is not Catholic.

slaved by assenting to the one than to the other.

Therefore if any persons interrogate me with this question, Have you witnessed these miracles? To these persons I will reply by quoting St. Paul: *Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not;—by faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, that from invisible things, visible things might be made;—by faith, Noah, having received an answer concerning those things which as yet were not seen, moved with fear, framed the ark for the saving of his house, by the which, he condemned the world: and was instituted heir of the justice which is by faith.* (Heb. xi. 1, 3, 7.)—My Brethren, I have never travelled to Rome, yet I am convinced of its existence.—I have never conversed with Cæsar, yet I know there was such a man. I was not present at the destruction of Jerusalem, yet I believe it as firmly as if I had been a witness; and I suppose that your faith on these points, is not less



steady than my own.—To establish then these miracles by proof, is not my present purpose; history and facts, which at all times speak for themselves, may be consulted. For if the testimony of others can furnish such a thing as moral certitude, it is undoubtedly combined with the miracles of our Saviour and his apostles, as much as with any event in ancient or modern times.—The voice of nations has delivered them down to us, and no species of evidence is wanting to place them beyond the reach of suspicion.

But have not the religions of Paganism and Idolatry, you observe, been also propagated and supported by miracles? No. In punishment of the crimes of men, a preternatural interference may have sometimes been permitted by Providence; but as the learned St. Chrysostom remarks, the very use that was made of that power, the vices it was always designed to encourage, the horrid violations of decency which characterized the equi-

vocal, ambiguous, and often contradictory oracles of Paganism, were such as to cover with shame and confusion the very persons who consulted them, and should have sufficed to convince them, that they were the dupes of infernal spirits. Whereas the miracles of Jesus Christ and his apostles were wrought for the happiness and the instruction of mankind, and to induce them to practice the most pure and heroical virtues. They were to prove that God took an interest in the virtue and felicity of his creatures, and called them to salvation by supernatural means.

But miracles, you say, have at length ceased, and another rule, the infallible authority of the Church, has been substituted in their place.—No ! my Brethren, miracles have never ceased but where they ceased to be necessary. They are *a sign*, says the apostle, *not to believers, but to unbelievers*. (1 Cor. xiv. 22 ) Employed as a sign of authority, they resemble those letters-patent, or charters, which prove

the authority a king has conferred upon a magistrate, or a commercial company; which once proved, is proved for always: nor is it necessary that there should be a repetition of such royal acts or expressions, for the particular cases which may afterwards occur. In the beginning miracles were necessary to establish the Church, and confirm the mission of the apostles. They were likewise necessary whenever preachers in after ages had to prove their authority to infidel nations. But these objects once atchieved, the means by which they were effected ceased to be necessary, and the Church was left to maintain herself by the ordinary exercise of prerogatives, originally vested in her, and miraculously confirmed to her, in the face of men. This establishment and propagation of the Christian Church will receive an illustration from the course pursued in raising an arch.—However solid and rocky the foundation may be, it is necessary to employ props and stays till the key stone is



fixed, and the whole has settled ; then the labourers gradually removing the scaffolding and supporters, entrust the work to the connection of the parts and the strength of the foundation.

But, admitting such to have been the establishment of the Christian Church, and such the foundation of her faith, does this advantage, you say, exclusively belong to the Roman Catholic Church? Yes, it is a distinction which she shares with no other. For, to use a negative proof, who ever witnessed or heard of a miracle that was wrought in testimony of any other Church? Numerous as were the miracles which took place in the Church of Greece, before she ceased to be Catholic by withdrawing from the communion of the Bishop of Rome, what miracle can she instance since that period? Again, if we look to the Protestant reformed Churches, what miracle has been wrought by Luther, Calvin, or any of their followers? Luther has said, and it is equivocally the language

of all the reformed, I am sent from Heaven.—Prove it then, we say, or we will not believe you, for every mad enthusiast might make the same assertion. Calvin laid claim to a divine authority, so have the founders of the other sects of Methodists, Quakers, and Anabaptists; but all have failed in the proof that was to establish it. Now, that the Church of Rome is miraculously established, is evident from the circumstance of her being founded by the apostles themselves, an honour to which no other can produce a claim.

Thus raised on the evidence of miracles, miracles have never ceased through succeeding ages, to bear testimony to the sanctity of her doctrine and the purity of her faith. Aware then of the opposition this declaration will receive from a world disposed to be incredulous, I appeal to ancient historians; I appeal to the tradition of nations; I appeal moreover to the writings of modern infidels, whose eagerness to discover,

but inability to detect deception, becomes a new proof to support our principle.—I might direct your attention to the well authenticated miracles of St. Bernard and of St. Frances Xaverius, and many other modern saints of the Catholic Church \*. In short, if you examine her history, you will find, that although miracles have ceased to be common, because they have ceased to be necessary, yet there have been circumstances in every period of her existence, in which God has been pleased in this manner to bear testimony to the truth of his Church and her doctrine, *by signs and wonders*. (Heb. ii. 4.) Come forward then, ye reformed, and manifest yourselves to be such, by some sign from heaven.—Jesus Christ has said, *the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me*. (John x. 25.) Whilst we then appeal to a similar testimony in our adherence to the ancient Church, we call upon you to prove your own recent establishment by signs equally positive. It

\* For which see *Butler's Lives of the Saints*.



is the proof employed by God from the days of Moses ; and surely you cannot expect that we should otherwise receive your word, and consider you as the elect of God, when we have such powerful motives to believe the faith and doctrine of another church ; for nothing less than the testimony of a positive miracle can establish your authority, and prove ours defective.

My Brethren, unless every man be entitled to credit on the strength of his *ipse dixit*, or be allowed the liberty of imposing on the multitude the ravings of a disordered imagination for the revelations of God, every divine messenger of heaven must establish his authority to instruct, by the infallible testimony of some sign or miracle.—Now, my Friends, if this were ever necessary, if it were practised by Moses and all the prophets, and by Jesus Christ and the apostles, it surely was particularly required in the instance of the reformation, when the world was to learn for the first time, that brutal, lascivious, avaricious

blasphemers \* were the chosen instruments of Jesus Christ, to reform his Church, and renovate her pristine piety. It was surely necessary, when these characters assumed a delegated divine power to revolutionize the Church of Christ,—to trample down the authority of her pastors,—and spread universal devastation through the Christian community. It was surely necessary, when Catholic institutions of piety were to make place for worldly establishments†,

\* See Serm. 20th.

† The lands of the Church founded some of our richest families among the nobility. In the hands of the ancient proprietors, their produce was entirely spent upon the estate, to the advantage of the tenantry and poor. And thus riches and population universally grew up round all our great abbeys, as may be still observed on the continent. These lands now often pamper one princely family, in the midst of depopulated starving villages; whose spiritual food moreover, in which they were once so rich, is become scarce as the green grass in the deserts of Arabia. Commerce may have enriched and peopled the towns, introducing vice and profligacy together;—but the destruction of monasteries has deprived the village-poor of their *own* patrimony—I mean constant employment—education—religion—and medical assistance. At present parochial relief is

—when overgrown armies were to be substituted for religious orders, and the edification afforded by monasteries, was to be exchanged for that of parish hospitals,—workhouses and prisons. It was surely necessary, when religion was to assume a new form,—when all the ancient and hereditary notions of virtue were to be set aside,—when the works of the primitive fathers and canonists were to be committed to the flames,—when perverse passion, under the

never extended but to the idle, the vicious, and the destitute ; whereas formerly it was customary for the monks to lend out money to the industrious at a low interest, and to assist them by every means to rise to comfortable ease. Then the poor were well *educated*, though they knew not how to spell nor read:—at present they can generally both spell and read, yet are absolutely uneducated. Ah ! philosophy, where is thy wisdom ? O religion, return with all thy consolations !

By the reformation were dissolved all the bands that harmonized social order in Europe, and every country immediately became an armed community. The greatest loss however, that society had to sustain among us, was, a liberal, I mean classical education for the middle classes, founded on religion,—and the respectable retreat which the monasteries afforded to younger children.



mask of reason, was to become the *ultima ratio hominum*.

For the conviction and the satisfaction of our hesitating minds in these circumstances, I say, we had a right to expect some sign from heaven, that Luther and the other apostles of the reformed religion, were the inspired of God, and entitled to obedience. Nay, Luther himself maintains the necessity of such a credential, in his dispute with Carlostadius, and the Anabaptists.—“Let Muncer be asked,” said he, “who had given him commission to teach? Should he answer God; let him prove it by a manifest miracle; for when God intends to alter any thing in the ordinary form of mission, it is by such signs that he declares himself.”\* But where shall we find them? which of the reformers ever wrought a miracle to attest an authority from God? Luther indeed has given an account of one miracle, on which his followers wish he had preserved

\* See Bossuet's Hist. of the Var. Lib. 1.

silence, since it rather proves more than is advantageous, or creditable to the reformed religion \*.

\* However strange it may appear,—that Luther held a conference with the devil, is what he himself acknowledges in his book *De Missa Privata*, as may be seen in three different editions of his works, printed by the care of his disciples, (viz. Wittenberg, t. 7. p. 479. Jenæ Ed. Germ. per Thoms, p. 82. Altenberg, t. 6. p. 86.) The account he gives of it is as follows:—"Being awakened at midnight, the devil began to dispute with me, according to his custom: Listen to me, Master Doctor, said he; do you consider that, for 15 years you have said Mass almost every day. What if all this time you have been guilty of idolatry, and, instead of adoring the body and blood of Christ, have adored bread and wine. I answered him, that I was a priest lawfully ordained by the bishop, and that having, from a principle of obedience, discharged my ministry with a sincere intention of consecrating, I saw no reason to doubt the validity of the consecration. True, replied Satan, but in the churches of Turks and Heathens, is not every thing done in an orderly manner, and in the spirit of obedience? Does that authorize their worship as orthodox, and perfectly correct? What if your ordination were null, and your consecration as vain and useless as that of Turkish priests in the exercise of their ministry, or of the false prophets under Jeroboam. Here (adds Luther) I was seized with a violent sweat, and my heart began to beat in a strange manner. The devil is very artful in adjusting his reasoning, and he also, pushes his arguments

But you say, my Brethren, we do not believe in miracles, or that there are such works.—With the testimony I have produced before the world, this declaration, my Brethren, goes no further than to shew, that you yourselves have never had the power

with great force; he has a voice strong and rough, and is so pressing in his objections, one after another, as scarcely to allow you time to breathe. Hence, I can conceive how it has repeatedly happened, that persons have in the morning been found dead in their beds. In the first place, he may suffocate them: he may also, by his method of disputing, cause such a trouble in the soul, as to render her unable to make any further resistance, and thus she may be compelled instantly to leave the body: which has nearly been my own case more than once.”

After this preface, Luther mentions five reasons which the devil alledged against the sacrifice of the Mass; reasons extremely frivolous in themselves, but which Luther considered of sufficient weight to justify his yielding to them, saying to those who might blame his conduct, that, “if they had heard the devil reasoning in the same forcible manner as he had done, they would take care not to appeal from his arguments to the practice of the Church, and the usages of antiquity, which would never satisfy them.” —Luther I believe was the first apostle, that ever pretended to preach the Gospel, by inspiration from the Devil.



of miracles to exercise, and that the promise of Christ to this effect has failed in you, from your very outset.—It was expressed in these terms: and, *these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.* (Mark xvi. 17.) Should the simple then ask the reason of this distinction between the Catholic and Protestant? I will give them this undisguised answer; It is because one is right and the other wrong:—one professes a divine, the other a human religion:—and as the latter never has been, so it never can be sanctioned by a miracle.—Miracles are the evidence of God himself, supernaturally interposing for our instruction and conviction. Now it would be blasphemous to suppose that the God of truth would concur to maintain a falsehood: and therefore as the Roman Catho-

lic Church is exclusively supported by miraculous signs, so she is exclusively entitled to the confidence of Christians \*.

My Brethren, I have now shewn you the basis on which rests the authority of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, and you clearly perceive the motives which induce us to receive her scriptures and her faith confirmed by them.—You now observe that it was not merely on the testimony of the senses, or the concurrence of reason, that the Christian faith was originally admitted, and consequently not on this evidence solely should it be either retained or abjured. What would you say to the folly of that individual, who first believes a fact on the evidence of history, and then rejects it because it cannot be mathematically demonstrated.—As you would all exclaim against the absurdity of such a course, why don't you equally except against the conduct of those

\* She moreover exclusively possesses the four characteristic marks of truth, UNITY, SANCTITY, CATHOLICITY and APOSTOLICITY. See the Sermons on those heads.

who have apostatized from the faith of their ancestors, because it is not what human reason can understand, although it was never proposed nor believed upon that testimony. If it had always been regulated by the homely rule of human reason, where was the necessity of miracles as an attestation? And if it be acknowledged by these persons that natural reason is incompetent to conceive faith in its sublime mysteries, such as the Trinity and Incarnation, why not also allow, that reason is likewise unequal to examine those mysteries, which, comparatively speaking, may be less sublime?

If, for instance, they have motives for believing, with their ancestors, that a God became man, and was crucified for the sins of the world, why should not the same motives also suffice, for believing with their ancestors, that bread and wine, transubstantiated or changed into his body and blood, thus become the spiritual food of our souls? Again, if they have mo-



tives for believing, with their ancestors, that our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ, in the sacrament of baptism, why not also believe with them, on the same motives, that the blood of Christ purifies our souls from sin, in the sacraments of confession and extreme unction? Why exclude human reason, in some cases, and make it judge in others of a similar nature? Never do the enemies of the Catholic Church betray a greater deficiency of sense and sound judgment, than when they bring before the tribunal of human reason a religion supernaturally revealed by the eternal Son of God himself, and miraculously propagated through the world by his apostles. Never do they convince us more of their folly, to say nothing of their impiety, than in abjuring what they do not understand, and in departing from that universal maxim, that no conclusion can be just, if formed on principles foreign to the question. More wise, more consistent would it be like Hume to reject the very

principles themselves.—“Had I witnessed,” writes that infidel, “the resurrection of Lazarus, and the other miracles of Christ, they might have made a fool of me, but they never would have left my understanding convinced of any supernatural operation.” Here is what is often called a strong mind !—here is the pride of human reason in perfection ! here she manifests, in the infidel Hume, what she can effect in others !

Concluding this discourse, I reproach those with slavery, who having thrown off the sacred, venerable, and august authority of the great Catholic Church, meanly submit to petty tyrants in religion, and suffer themselves to be blindly led by men, whose only rule is caprice, and only object ambition.—To talk of servility, in conforming to general Councils, is surely ridiculous in them, who bow with such reverence, to the opinions of self-constituted preachers \*, not more entitled to at-

\* As a fair evidence of Protestant servility in religion I will quote the following extract, inserted in several of the

tention than those whom they address. It is to be enslaved, I repeat, *to be tost to and fro by every wind of doctrine*,—to believe to-day what they deny to-morrow, and to live at the mercy of their own or other's speculations.—Whilst therefore these persons are basely enslaved under the charm of the name of liberty, we shall continue

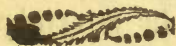
London Gazettes. "On Sunday evening the 14th inst. William Radcliffe, a drummer in the West Kent Militia, (being on his march through Haverhill with his regiment, and halting there for the day) preached a Sermon at the Independent Meeting-House, in that place, from John xiii. 14, 15. His unassuming deportment, pleasing address, and eloquent appropriate style, drew the marked attention of a numerous and respectable congregation." (*Bury Post.*)

A Catholic Priest might here employ the reflection of Jesus Christ, *I am come in the name of the Father and you receive me not, if an other shall come in his own name, him you will receive.* (John v. 43.) In a Methodist Chapel in Hinde Street, and within a hundred yards of my own pulpit, I myself have had a rival *prophet* in a Sergeant of his Majesty's Life-Guards, who has been in the habit of dispensing the word, (I know not whether of death or life) and has been thought by his audience far better qualified to wield the sword of the spirit than myself, an approved PRIEST OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. At the day of judgment however, we and our respective congregations must appear face to face.



to render a more dignified submission to that authority, which has been placed over us by God himself.

Let others boast of their mental acuteness, of their proficiency in natural and rational religion, of having formed a system perhaps as perfect as their fluctuating systems in philosophy, we will never envy their *persuasive words of human wisdom*, but proceeding on different ground *the power of God*, will preach the religion of Christ Jesus, and rest our doctrine on the more certain basis of divine authority, made evident to us by supernatural means. It shall be our pride and our glory to divest ourselves of all prejudice, and apprehension for the opinions of the world, and in its first purity give you the unadulterated Gospel of Jesus, whilst we only look for a recompense in the world to come.



## SERMON XXX.

### ON DIVINE FAITH.

*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*  
(Heb. xi. 6.)

EACH day's experience affords us fresh ground for believing that actually there are but two moral systems in the world ;—that of the Catholic, and that of the Free-thinker. Paradoxical as this opinion may appear after all we have urged, it is nevertheless strictly true :—nay, a direct deduction from our former positions.—The Catholic system of faith and worship, is known, fixed and defined ; and its professors are as easily distinguished, as the coin issued from the mint. But if we advance a step beyond that line, which is the landmark of catholic principles, we immediately perceive that we tread upon uncer-

tain, undefined, moveable soil,—where disorder reigns,—where free-thinking is professed and inculcated by every class. A Free-thinker, in the vulgar acceptation of the word, signifies one, who has so far carried the privilege of thinking, as to question the existence of a Providence.—Now mark, my Friends, this is but the last act and scene of this tragedy.—The character here winds itself up, so as even to throw away the mask that hitherto disguised the actor.—But how did the whole begin?—Unrestrained opinion must have run a long race of thought, before it could settle in Atheism!—Say then when free-thinking principles are first assumed.

A Free-thinker in the correct signification of the word is one that considers himself *free* to think for himself;—who refusing to submit his own judgment to any controul, determines all questions as in his own mind he judges things to be:—and upon these principles are formed the



Atheist, the Deist, the Mahometan.—But does free-thinking end here?—No, in the bosom of the Church of England,—in the bosom of Protestantism,—and of Methodism, free-thinking reigns triumphant.—It reigns in their universities,—it reigns in their pulpits,—it reigns in their writings,—it reigns in public and private discourse,—and it reigns in their hearts.—Guided by this principle, would not one exclude the Athanasian Creed from the Liturgy?—another the Thirty-nine Articles?—another the doctrine of eternal torments?—Does every Lutheran believe in the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist? Does every Calvinist admit the absolute predestination of the human race to either happiness or misery? Does every Methodist acknowledge the necessity of infant baptism? To what then can be ascribed this abandonment of principle, if not to a renunciation of authority, and the adoption of that fundamental maxim of the Free-thinker;—That man is to determine

upon all questions, as in his own mind he may think best.

Now, my Brethren, if this be the free-thinking principle, I maintain that it has infected every congregation of persons, out of the Catholic Church, and has so completely diffused itself through the established Church of this kingdom, that I may challenge my countrymen to produce from the entire nation, the single example of one that adheres to its doctrine. Nay I fear not to throw down the same gauntlet to all the dissenting sects, among whom you will not find two individuals who do not vary in faith. All this is free-thinking;—and therefore I conceive I have established my proposition, That strictly there are but two systems of religion in the world; that of the Catholic, and that of the Free-thinker. So that where Catholicism ends, Free-thinking begins.

It is an established principle, that whatever a man believes, he is supposed to believe from some rational motive;

that is, there must be some cause to produce this assenting act, of the soul:—and, as every physical effect is in proportion to its cause, so this moral effect, in the mind, will be according to the force of that impulse which directs it. If a man believe a fact on the doubtful testimony of rumour, his belief must partake of that uncertainty, and it may eventually happen to be erroneous. If he believe, on the probable evidence of a few, he can only have a probable opinion. On the other hand, if a man believe a fact, on the concurring testimony of numbers, offering a moral certitude, for instance, that Jerusalem was destroyed, his belief is human certitude unshaken by any doubt. Nevertheless however firmly he believe a fact upon such evidence, his faith is still human and can be no other. But if he believe a truth or fact, on the testimony of God, his belief is divine faith, and essentially excludes the existence of doubt, or possibility of deception. *If we receive the testi-*



*mony of men*, writes St. John, *the testimony of God is greater.* (1 Ep. v. 9.) Such, my Brethren, is the nature of the Christian faith, which being founded on the word, the authority, or evidence of God, becomes firm and unshaken like the *rock*.—As no man trembles for his house, if it stand upon such a foundation, so no man will fear the truth of his faith, if it be built on the word or testimony of God. Appearances may be against him, that is, the carnal senses, or human judgment, may bear a different evidence, as they actually do in the sacrament of the altar; but he says within himself, if my faith is with thee, oh God, I care not who, or what is against it.

The conduct of St. Peter furnishes a beautiful example of this faith. When many of the disciples abandoned Jesus because they found the *saying hard*, that, *unless they should eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, they should not have life in them*, upon their withdrawing, Jesus turned to his apostles, and

said, *And will you also go away?* And Simon Peter answered him, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life.* (John vi. 68, 69.) My Brethren, when Jesus Christ communicated his doctrine to his followers, they believed it on the sacred motive, that being the Son of God, he could not deceive, nor be deceived as to the truth of what he taught. Thus their belief, or faith, became divine, because it was grounded on that divine motive; and on the same motive the apostles received the whole of revelation.—We believe, they said, because truth itself has spoken. *God in these days has spoken to us by his Son.* (Heb. i. 2.)

In the same manner, the first Christians received the doctrine preached by the apostles, as the doctrine revealed by God, on the noble motive, that God who had miraculously confirmed their authority, could not deceive nor be deceived: for St. John writes, *he that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself.* (1 Ep. v. 10.)

Their belief therefore, which on any other motive, would have been only *human*, was thus sublimely exalted to a *divine* faith.—When however, the apostles had fully established that Church which, according to the promise of Christ, *was to stand upon a rock till the end of time*, they pointed to the fabric they had raised by signs and miracles, and said, that will give testimony of us, and of our doctrine: for their synodical decree was announced to the *faithful at Antioch, and in Syria and Cilicia*, in the name of the Church assembled, and the Holy Ghost. (*Acts xv.*) From that period through all antiquity, no other motive has been proposed, but her infallible testimony\*.

My Brethren, I have already fully discussed the authority of the Church; I have only to observe, on that basis the

\* To the question in the Catechism, “How shall we know what the things are which God teaches?” The answer is,—“By the testimony of the Holy Catholic Church of God, which he has established by innumerable miracles, and illustrated by the lives and deaths of innumerable saints.”



faith of Christians was built before the great Council of Nice ;—by that testimony their faith was proved in that celebrated assembly, and that only has been its distinguishing characteristic to the present hour. I have already shewn that the speculations of human reason in revealed religion, even when exercised in explaining scripture, are defective and variable, and can only induce the mind to yield a weak and doubtful assent. Whereas the testimony of the Church, derived from God, and privileged with the prerogatives of perpetuity, infallibility, and miraculous signs, is a motive sufficient to command the soul to render a full, perfect, and steady faith. Now this motive being supernatural and divine, the assent of the soul becomes a supernatural and divine act, for which a special grace is necessary, and forms what is termed a supernatural and divine faith. It is even an act of the soul, as distinct, and as much above a moral, or human act, as God himself is raised above all created objects.

Thus you may be enabled, my Brethren, to form some conception of the merit of faith, in the eyes of heaven, *without which*, St. Paul declares, *it is impossible to please God*: (Heb. xi. 6.) and hence you may explain the apparent severity of the principle, that without genuine faith, every individual shall be an outcast. *He who believes not shall be condemned.* (Mark xv. 16.) Faith is thus the foundation of all religion. It enters into all virtue;—and as *the just man*, according to St. Paul, *lives by faith*, (Rom. i. 17.) this faith gives a quality to all his actions; so that those who are deficient in faith, want that only property which can render their actions holy and meritorious before God. Hence, my Brethren, I hope you partly understand the high consequence attached to faith!—Without it we sink from the dignified rank of redeemed children of God and heirs of heaven, to the degraded and vilified condition of cast-off man. *For this is the tes-*

*timony that God hath given to us, eternal life. (1 John v. 11.)*

My Brethren, having then, I trust, made you acquainted with the nature of divine faith, which is to believe, without doubting, truths revealed by the Deity, my next observation will respect the integrity of a virtue, which to be true, must necessarily be entire. By the integrity of faith is signified a readiness of mind to believe *all* that God has revealed, or, in other words, a disposition not wilfully to except any one truth that has been so announced. This integrity of faith is necessary by the very nature of that divine virtue; all virtues being universal. For should the soul believe one or more truths, not because human reason approves, or the senses dictate an assent, but on the purer and nobler motive, the unerring word of God, then with the same simplicity the soul is equally required to believe all truths proposed to her, on the same incontrovertible testimony. To except any one point, is im-



plicitly to question the authority on which they all rest:—nay, it is absolutely to affirm, that God is not always deserving of our confidence, and that we must be circumspect in believing him.

Such a faith, my Brethren, is but the shadow of faith. I know many reason in this manner; As my faith embraces the greater part of the Christian truths,—(or what they are pleased to call fundamental,) it is of little consequence whether I do, or do not believe the rest. In answer, therefore, I will ask,—what is the crime committed by that heathen, who rejects the whole of revelation, and its divine truths? Is it not that of interior pride and contemptuous resistance to the authority of God? And what is the crime that Christian commits in the sight of heaven, who obstinately rejects any one particular revealed truth? Is it not likewise that of interior pride and contemptuous resistance to the authority of God? In either case the criminality is identical, and both individuals are equally

destitute of faith :—unless you pretend that in one instance, and not in another, religion can be reconciled with impiety, vice with virtue, and duty with insult. My Brethren, as the motive is the essence of this virtue, how can you suppose that it can exist in any soul acting so independently of God?

This integrity of faith will derive farther illustration from the universality of the virtue of charity. Commanded by Jesus Christ to love all men, for the sake of God, let us suppose that there is one individual whom you hate, though you are in friendship with the rest of mankind. Can you say that you possess the divine virtue of charity? No! most undoubtedly you cannot. For God being the motive for loving every neighbour, you cannot accept him and reject him with the same breath,—neither will he allow you to be for him and against him at the same instant of time. *He that gathers not with me, says he, scatters.* (Luke xi. 23.) As your charity, there-

fore, must essentially embrace all men, so your faith must essentially comprehend all the divine truths which God has revealed.

It is indeed a violation of this integrity, or a wilful rejection of any one article of faith, that constitutes the grievous crime of heresy. Grievous, I say, for St. Paul declares, in the third chapter of his Epistle to Titus, that *it subverteth a man, causeth him to sin, and actually condemns him*. And in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, he places *sects*, which are always the attendants of heresy, among those things *which will exclude from the kingdom of God*. Nay, in the beginning of the same Epistle he pronounces an *anathema* even against an *angel*, who should presume to deviate from the unity of faith. Whoever is at all read in ecclesiastical history, and the works of the fathers, must observe, that from the very apostolic age, heresy has been always viewed as one of the greatest crimes that could be committed against the sacred Trinity, whilst its teachers were regarded as the undisguised emissaries of Satan. St.



Irenæus\* informs us, “ that when St. John accidentally met the heretic Cerinthus, in a bath, he exclaimed to his companions, “ Let us, my Brethren, make haste and begone, lest the bath, wherein is Cerinthus, the enemy of our faith, should fall upon our heads.” St. Jerome relates, that St. Polycarp was thus accosted, in the streets of Rome, by the heretic Marcion. “ Do you know me, Polycarp? Yes, answered that disciple of the apostle St John, I know you to be the first-born of Satan.”

I have mentioned these two incidents, that you may not impute to us, the successors of these men, a greater severity of principle, than that which directed them. We only discharge our duty, in laying the law before you;—we framed it not. And to convince you that heresy, which is an obstinate error in any matter of faith, has always been considered a grievous sin, it has been the constant

\* Lib. 3. c. 3. Euseb. lib. 3. c. 3.

practice of the Church, from the earliest period, to exclude from her communion those infected with it, and to refuse them a participation of her sacraments, as unworthy those sacred mysteries. Look, I repeat, to the writings of St. Paul, and the Acts of the Apostles,—consult the works of the Fathers, as also the decrees of the Council of Nice, and those succeeding, and you will universally find that your faith must be entire.

Having fully explained to you the nature of divine faith, the grand and important inquiry now remaining is, what is the true rule of faith, and how are these divine truths to be discerned? My Brethren, the rule you are in quest of, may be considered under two general views; the one comprises that by which the Church is directed, in teaching the different articles of faith; the other, that by which the faithful are directed in believing them. Having established by the most solid proof the exclusive authority of the Catholic, Roman,

and Apostolic Church of Christ, in the concerns of religion over the whole of the Christian world, I shall confine my observations to that rule, by which the Catholic Church is directed, in teaching faith; which is, NEVER TO PROPOSE, AS A TRUTH TO BE BELIEVED BY ALL, WITH A DIVINE FAITH, WHAT HAS NOT BEEN HANDED DOWN FROM THE BEGINNING BY A CLEAR TRADITION, AS REVEALED TO THE APOSTLES. This, when the urgency of a case requires it, is determined in a General Council of her prelates and doctors, who assembling from every nation in the universe, depose to that doctrine, which has been always taught in their respective churches \*. Therefore, the rule by which the Catholic faithful are directed in discerning and believing the several points of faith, is, THAT ALL THOSE TRUTHS, ARE TO BE BELIEVED WITH A DIVINE FAITH, AS REVEALED IN THE WORD OF GOD TO THE APOSTLES

\* Only a part of the faith of the Church has been thus defined in council.



WHICH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH UNIVERSALLY TEACHES, OR PROPOSES TO ALL WITH THE ABOVE FORMALITY.

My Brethren, by the nature of this rule, you are required to be already instructed in the claim of that Church to infallibility in doctrine, for on the strength of that claim, the certainty of this rule must depend. It must be superfluous however for me to advert again to that subject, I shall of course only remind you of that declaration of St. Paul, that *the Church of the living God, is the pillar, and the ground of truth.* (Tim. iii. 18.) And I bid you remember moreover the assurance of Christ, that *the Father should send a paraclete, who would remain with her for ever, the spirit of truth.* (John xiv. 16.) Hence it will be proper for you to observe also, that as the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ is the depository of revealed faith, we, her individual ministers and preachers, have no power or authority over it;—we are but the organs, or instruments, by

which she communicates it *to you, and to every creature*. She is the fountain, and what we draw from her, the same, pure and unadulterated, must we distribute. We should incur even an *anathema* if we did not. Hence again, though her doctrine flow through a thousand channels in this realm, and although it flow through millions throughout the world, yet every individual receives but one and the same apostolic, Catholic faith. Such is the testimony which truth gives of herself.

Thus have I laid before you that simple and plain rule, which will enable you to discern all those revealed truths, which it is necessary for you to believe, and which constitute what is termed the TRUE CHRISTIAN FAITH.—It is the rule which has served to guide the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church of Christ, in one unerring line of doctrine, down a course of eighteen centuries; and it is the rule which, at this day, preserves in one and the same faith, that is, in the steady

belief of the same revealed truths, that immense portion of mankind living within the pale of her communion, spread over the surface of the four quarters of the globe. In fine, it is a rule calculated to retain them, for ever, in perfect union of creed ; for, in admitting only the revelations of Jesus Christ to his apostles, clearly handed down as matter for divine faith, it formally excludes all the idle speculations of individuals, the private revelations of saints, and what are usually termed pious traditions. It shuts out the delusions of fancy, the many readings of scripture, and exactly takes in what is made absolute by God himself, the recognition of the supreme authority of the Church. *If any one will not hear the Church, let him be to thee,* said Jesus Christ, *as the heathen and the publican.* (Matt. xviii. 17.) To express then to you, my Brethren, this rule, in short, — THOSE TRUTHS, AND THOSE TRUTHS ONLY, WHICH HAVE BEEN REVEALED TO THE APOSTLES, IN THE WORD



OF GOD, EITHER WRITTEN OR UNWRITTEN, AND PROPOSED TO ALL BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, ARE TO BE BELIEVED WITH A DIVINE FAITH \*.

In drawing this discourse to a conclusion, it was my intention to notice the differences respecting faith, which exist between Protestants and Catholics, and to have determined them by the very principles I have established this day. Time, however, will not allow me to put that design in execution. I shall, therefore, terminate this instruction, by adverting to those religious ideas, which are become so common and general among all classes of men. My Brethren, there was a time when all Christians conceived themselves strictly bound to learn, to believe,

\* The Catholic rule is expressed by a Father of the Church in these few words; *What every where, what always, what by all has been believed.*" (St. Vin. Lyrin. Com. monit. c. 2. — See moreover Veron's excellent treatise on the RULE OF CATHOLIC FAITH, which may be found printed at the end of Hook's *Religionis naturalis et revelatæ Principia*. Ed. Paris. 1774.

and to profess the Christian doctrine, and regarded it as a constituent, which ought necessarily to enter into the life of every moral and virtuous man.—That period, however, seems now elapsed, and a great part of men have brought themselves to think, that the knowledge and profession of the Christian doctrine are no ways essential to the acquirement of virtue, and that a morality pleasing to the Creator may be practised without them. My Brethren, when things are come to this pass, we can only say, that the kingdom of Antichrist has commenced, and that the extinction of faith, for which Jesus Christ has prepared us, is nearly complete; *and when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find think you faith upon earth?* (Luke xviii. 8.)

To exemplify this new-fashioned Christian, behold that character, who entering into life, determines to make himself just what is called a useful and ornamental member of society. To the endowments of an amiable and generous mind, he unites

the advantages of a liberal education, attends to all the duties of his state, is strictly honourable in his dealings,—lives in friendship with all men,—and reverences his Creator. He often dissuades his neighbour from a criminal action,—gives an alms to a distressed widow,—and thanks his God for those blessings he enjoys. He goes to church on the Sunday, because that is a proper action for the Lord's day ; —as also, to convince the world that he respects religion. Having been baptized himself in his infancy, and all his relatives being baptized, and baptism being recommended by the laws of his country, he has that ceremony performed upon his own children ; yet, if one should die without it, he does not apprehend that the infant forfeits any spiritual blessing. He believes, in common with the rest of mankind, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ sent to instruct men, and that the gospels are holy books, written by individuals inspired.



But if a friend speak to him of motives for believing this object in preference to that,—he manifests the greatest contempt for such advice.—He cannot conceive, he says, that God will interest himself about what men believe!—all is indifferent, to himself!—he never questions a neighbour about believing this, or that truth, and he supposes that God is not less indifferent! For his part, he would advise a man to believe steadily just what his parents have taught him. Were Peter instructed to believe that there are *two* persons in God, he ought to believe it firmly; and if Paul were taught to believe, that there are three, he should believe that as firmly. The manly way of proceeding, however, is never to give these things a thought. Thus this individual lives, and so he dies, always trusting in the infinite mercy of a benign Creator. The respect, and the regret of the world accompany him to the grave.

Well! perhaps some one in this assembly will exclaim, is not such a character better

than he who is acquainted with all the minuteness of the Catholic faith, and yet leads an impious life? My Brethren, I set such persons aside, we are speaking of the virtuous. Well! is not he, a virtuous Christian? He a Christian! better call him a Pagan, or a Heathen. He virtuous! Yes, he exhibited all the virtues of a heathen, and his reward shall be, the reward of a heathen. What is there in the life and morality of such a man, that can distinguish him from the heathen, if we except the name of Christian! and the name is all that really belongs to him of the character. He was honest and moral you say,—so are many heathens. He believed that there was such a person as Jesus Christ,—so do many heathens. But he was made a Christian by baptism;—whatever faith or grace he may have received in his infancy, all abandoned him by the heathenish infidelity of his riper years; *It is not every one who says Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of*

*heaven, but only he, says Jesus Christ, who does the will of my Father. (Matt. vii. 21.)*

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a man without faith to enter the kingdom of God.

I conclude, most earnestly entreating you not to be deluded by the false ideas of a corrupted and mistaken world. A God has created you, a God has died for you, a God has undertaken to sanctify you by a supernatural religion, but as it does not enter into the dispensations of his providence to destroy free-will, only a faithful correspondence on your part will merit an eternal reward.

END OF VOL. II.



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## ERRATA, VOL. II.

ATTACHED TO EVERY APPROVED COPY.

- Page 321.—For “noways privileged against”—read, “no-  
ways privileged in worldly transactions against.”  
Idem. For “there is no article of the Catholic faith  
which teaches that Popes are either immaculate, or  
infallible.—Sinners like ourselves, my Brethren,  
they have even been deposed by that Church  
which they formed the head,” read, “*The question  
of Papal infallibility has never been dogmatically  
judged by the Church, at least so as to oblige the  
faithful to yield to it a formal assent, under pain of  
heresy. Without disturbing therefore that point, of  
Catholic doctrine, though not of defined faith, which  
holds that the Papal decisions EX CATHEDRA on faith  
and morals are infallible, still we may affirm, that it is  
not to Popes exclusively,*” &c.
- 325.—For, “they received with that scorn and indigna-  
tion it deserved,” read, “*they rejected.*”
- 333.—For, “conferred upon the collective body of the  
apostles, so it still continues annexed to their succe-  
sors,” read, “*conferred upon St. Peter, and the apos-  
tles collectively, so it still continues annexed to Pe-  
ter’s successors in the See of Rome and the other  
Bishops of the Catholic church.*”
- 440.—After “Bishops of the Church,” erase “as  
directing and communicating with their flocks, may  
be said to be their representatives; consequently,”  
and read, “*the Bishops of the Church, whether  
dispersed or assembled, constitute.*”
- 441.—Erase, “*The Catholic church in like,*” &c. to the  
end of the note.





